

VIETNAM COURIER

February 1974

MONTHLY

New series



Our Monthly

Comment

THE year 1974 opens with a frantic campaign of incitement to war very carefully prepared by Saigon and Washington.

On January 4 Nguyen Van Thieu declared in Can Tho (South Viet Nam) that "there will be no peace and no general elections." He even threatened to cancel the South Vietnamese bipartite negotiations at both Tan Son Nhat and La Celle Saint Cloud and ordered his troops, "setting all criticisms at defiance," to attack the PRG-controlled zone. "The war is beginning again," he cried.

On January 7 in Washington US Defence Secretary J. Schlesinger echoed the South Vietnamese puppet, stating that should a new "general offensive" take place in South Viet Nam, Nixon might ask Congress for authority to make use of US tactical aircraft to back the Saigon army. The same kind of threat has been many times reiterated subsequently.

On January 8, a Pentagon mouthpiece informed the public that the USA was replacing the Saigon army's F-5A fighters with far more up-to-date F-5Es. Sixty F-5Es were bound for

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Saigon, the Voice of America disclosed. AFP reported that another 100 planes of this type will be supplied to Saigon in the next two years.

What is new in these statements is not strictly speaking their contents. Forced to sign the Paris Agreement a year ago, Nixon and Thieu have used every means at their disposal in an attempt to ignore the reality—recognized by the Agreement—that there exist in South Viet Nam two administrations, two armies, two zones of control and three political forces. Hence the continuous land-grabbing operations and the intensification since October 1973 of air raids against places lying deep in the liberated areas. In Saigon as well as in many other provinces, people are being told to dig trenches and erect ramparts so as to be prepared for a supposed PLAF general attack; in fact this is just a psywar trick and a preparation for a real war.

Since the signing of the Paris Agreement Nixon himself and his near collaborators have time and again threatened a new air war against the Vietnamese people. Reconnaissance flights over both North and South Vietnam by US aircraft were carried out in support of that threat. Tens of thousands of American militarymen in civilian clothes are remaining in South Viet Nam or have been freshly introduced, hundreds of planes, tanks, ordnance pieces, a million and half tons of weapons and munitions have been illegally supplied to Thieu's army.

So what is new in the recent statements of Saigon and Washington is rather the cynicism with which the war policy has now been overtly declared by the top officials of the two

administrations — and that, only two or three weeks before the first anniversary of the Paris Agreement. It stands to reason that responsibility lies first and foremost with the Nixon administration without whose consent Thieu would not venture to ignore the implementation of the Agreement.

The green light has again been given by Washington and Saigon may now engage in fresh provocations and adventures.

An accord was arrived at between the two South Vietnamese delegations at Tan Son Nhat before the Tet Festival on the release of the rest of the civilian and military personnel mentioned in the plan agreed upon on July 17, 1973. Nevertheless, giving absurd reasons and laying down new conditions, the Saigon delegation went back on its word. Indignation runs high among the population and families of prisoners who have been looking forward impatiently to the return of their dear ones on the occasion of the traditional Tet.

Meanwhile air raids against the liberated zone have been stepped up. On January 11, A-37s, in 57 sorties, bombed and strafed the ICCS team seat at Duc Co, while others attacked Duc Nghiep, one of the localities chosen for the release of captured civilian and military personnel.

Thieu's new manoeuvre in the "National Assembly" with a view to strengthening his regime and making sure that he remains the sole instrument of Yankee neo-colonialism should be seen in the context of this bellicose policy. A three-point draft of amendment to the "1967 Constitution," which has been put forward by

him, aims at: 1) appointing by the "National Assembly" of judges at the Supreme Court so far nominated by the body of judges, prosecutors and barristers; 2) appointing by the Ministry of the Interior of province chiefs who, according to the Constitution, must be elected; and 3), last but not least, prolonging by one year the mandate (which until now lasts four years) of the "President of the Republic" and making him eligible for re-election. The August 1973 partial "elections" provided Thieu with a comfortable majority of 168 out of 219 seats in the Saigon "National Assembly." Consequently, on January 19, the amendment was passed without difficulty. Washington has reaffirmed its choice: Thieu, the saboteur of the Paris Agreement, must remain in power for many years to defend American interests.

And yet, on January 4, Thieu had to admit in Can Tho that for him the "situation is getting worse." Indeed the land-grabbing operations by the Saigon army have been dealt vigorous counter-blows. Economically and politically, things are going from bad to worse. While the North Vietnamese people are enjoying their Tet in peace, the shadow of war and of economic crisis looms large over the Saigon-controlled zone of South Viet Nam.

American manoeuvres and menaces — at a time when the United States itself is beset with immense difficulties — will certainly not save the Thieu regime; neither can they intimidate a people who has already successfully opposed the US war machine.

January 25, 1974

VIET NAM COURIER

ONE YEAR'S IMPLEMENTATION of the Paris Agreement on Viet Nam

*Below are the main contents of the January 1974 White Book
published by the DRVN Ministry of Foreign Affairs:*

PART ONE: TWO OPPOSING POLICIES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT ON VIET NAM

... On September 1, 1973, Premier Pham Van Dong of the DRVN pointed out: "For the Vietnamese people, for the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam and the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam, to strictly respect and scrupulously implement the Paris

Agreement is not only to fulfil the obligation incumbent on us as signatory parties, but also to apply an important policy which we have advocated."

As for the US Government, it has always opposed the implementation of many essential provisions of the Agreement. It has

tolerated and encouraged the Saigon Administration's violations of the Agreement in order, step by step, to erase the existence in South Viet Nam of two administrations, two armies, two zones of control and three political forces, to impose US neo-colonialism on South Viet Nam, and to perpetuate the partition of Viet Nam.

PART TWO: THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT ON VIET NAM OVER THE PAST YEAR

I. Provisions already implemented

— The ending of the US war of aggression against the Vietnamese people in both zones, North and South, and the withdrawal of the US expeditionary corps from South Viet Nam.

— The Government of the RSVN have returned to the United States

all captured US military personnel and foreign civilians, totalling 588 persons. The PRG has returned 5,016 captured and detained military personnel of the Saigon Administration. The US and Saigon Administration side have returned 26,508 persons to the PRG.

II. The United States and the Saigon Administration have been systematically violating many essential provisions of the Agreement

— *The cease-fire is not yet effective in South Viet Nam:*

"The cease-fire does not mean the end of the war," declared Nguyen Van Thieu, an hour before the cease-fire went into effect. A plan

for the "invasion of territory" has been carried out by the Saigon armed forces in four stages: preparations, pre-cease-fire actions, actions during the cease-fire, and post-cease-fire actions.

From January 28 to December 15, 1973, the Saigon Administration committed 301,097 violations, consisting of:

— 34,266 land-grabbing operations (including 37 division-size ones);

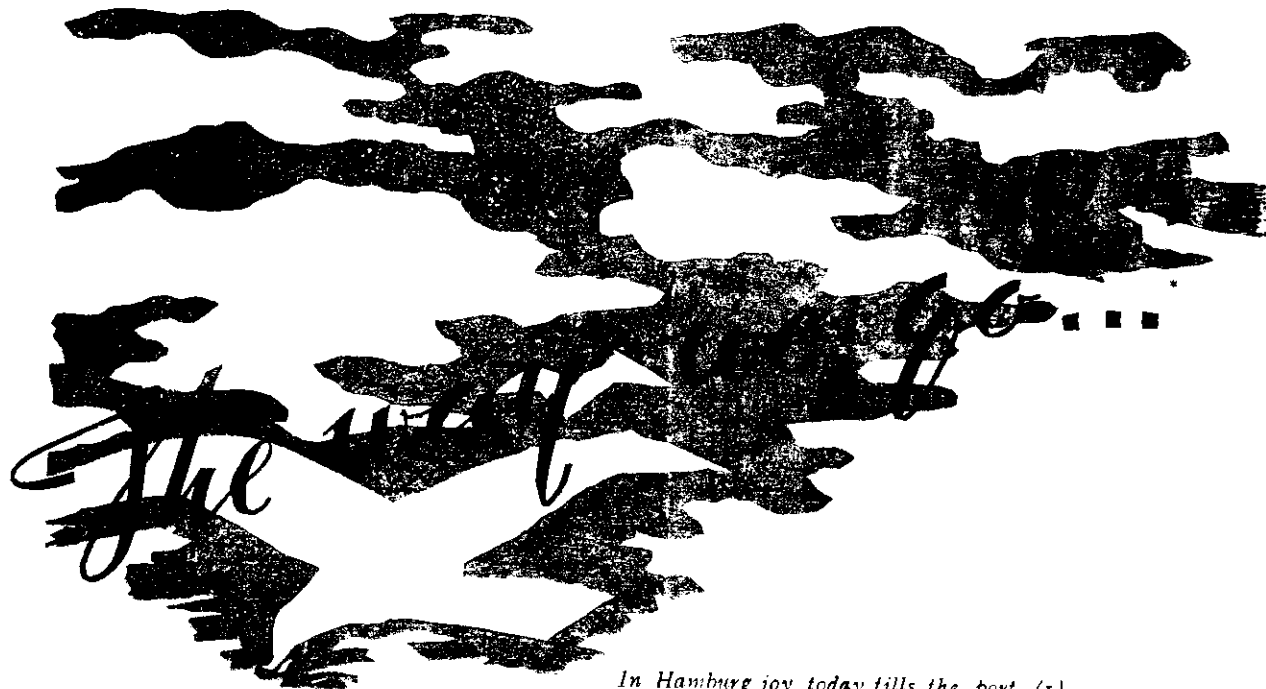
— 35,532 artillery shellings;

— 14,749 aerial bombardments and reconnaissances;

— 216,550 police and "pacification" operations.

The PRG has judged it necessary to punish severely the acts of sabotage by the Saigon Administration against the cease-fire.

(Continued on page 26)



I knew
The Southern road,
The road which leads to the front.
I took the way of the sky,
The way that leads to the West,
From the seas of the East to the seas of the North.

Autumn
White with the wings of the sea-gulls.
Birch woods golden with the fallen leaves.
I'm going, as if in darkness and mist,
Fierce battles
With no shots fired.

Is there anything new in the West?
Yes, there is night and day.
There is gold and the iron heel,
There is blood and tears,
There are wolves and heroes.

THEN COMRADES, COME, RALLY!
AND THE LAST FIGHT LET US FACE...
On my long road the song accompanies me,
The song of the Communists.
Our love is stronger than guns.
Whatever they do,
I'm coming to you, friends.
WE'LL GO OUR WAY!

In Hamburg joy today fills the port. (1)
Great looms the shadow of Thaelman (2), the helms-
man of the revolution.

Munich I've known, staunch and gentle,
A "fragile seed" (3) that yearns for life.
Frankfurt is aglow with light.
I go to Goethe's home in the night,
Not a candle.
Everywhere, O Beethoven, your music
Carries me on the wings
Of Freedom and Courage.

What joy this autumn morning
As the car flies over the blue-grey Rhine,
Taking me to Trèves
To a man of another time
Who became mankind.
I bring greetings to you, Marx, so dear to our hearts!
Greater than all the genies,
You created light
And brought dawn to the earth.
To Viet Nam you bring victory,
To each of us faith in us all.
"For a reason to live, be ready to sacrifice
your life!" (4)
For you, life is immense love and noble cause.
Let me sing your praise
With a wreath of golden chrysanthemums,
And a million words of gratitude.

(*) Poem written after a journey to the German Federal Republic and Great Britain in November 1973. The author, Secretary of the Central Committee, represented the Viet Nam Workers' Party at the Congresses of the Communist Parties of the GFR and Great Britain.

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*Oh, we know that in your heart you're still suffering
From sorrows of your own and of us all.
Your native land still bears heavy chains,
Like Christ's body pierced with criminal nails.*

*But it will come, the Day of the Last Judgment!
Endless the singing of men's consciences,
Endless the murmur of young forces,
Like seeds sprouting under the snow.*

*"IF YOU DON'T WANT TO BE THE
ANVIL, BE THE HAMMER!" (5)
Brothers and sisters! "Trotz alledem!" (6)
Shoulder to shoulder, forward!
Long is the struggle
Between us and them. Between blood and gold.*

*The flight crosses the sea. On London
The fog spreads into an immense sadness.
Whence comes it? Perhaps it was always like this,
Long centuries of twilight.*

*Along the pavement I walk
Amidst the fumes of engines and shadows of black
umbrellas,
Struggling for breath as if there were no sky and
no wind.
The road fades, just the yellow light of street lamps.*

*Two July Square.
Old lions
Continue to dream their stony dreams.
Before the Royal Palace
Two solemn cavaliers stand guard.
Oh, Shakespeare, if you came back among us,
Would the old tragedies be any different?*

*We wish to compose the song of the Congress,
The blissful song of tomorrow; the wind is rising,
The fog thins out.*

*TURN BRITAIN LEFT! (7)
We wish to write the song of the cup of wine
Hot and fragrant, bitter and pungent,
I drink with you tonight, brother miners.
If you don't want to be the coal, be the fire!*

*Good-bye! Our way leads towards home,
I've been away too long, it seems.
A last look on the long road of mist and snow,
But see! On the four horizons spring is already
bursting.
The seeds that have been sown carry the new harvest,
Joy springs from the bosom of life.
In the Truong Son Range the way forward has been
blazed,
The way we go and which leads us to all men...*

TO HUU

Hanoi, January 1974
Translated from the Vietnamese.

(1) Congress of the West German Communist Party.

(2) Leader of the German Communist Party, a native of Hamburg. Murdered by Hitlerite fascists.

(3) An allusion to a militant review of the GFR whose name suggests this idea in the Vietnamese language (Tr.).

(4) A quotation from Marx (Tr.).

(5) A line from Goethe.

(6) Famous words of Karl Liebknecht: "Against all comers!"

(7) A slogan at the Congress of the British Communist Party.



WITH peace restored after the signing of the January 27, 1973 Paris Agreement, North Viet Nam has turned to the work of healing the ruins of war.

Great efforts have been exerted to remedy the immense destruction and many difficulties caused by the bombardments and the mining of ports.

Particular stress has been laid on the restoration of **transport and communications**, a key sector, which bore the brunt of the bombing attacks.

Only 28 days after the signing of the Paris Agreement, the Long Bien bridge, crossing the Red River in Hanoi, was reopened to traffic. Then hundreds of railway or road bridges of different sizes were repaired or rebuilt. Among them were the bridges of Ham Rong, Hoang Mai and Do Len on the Hanoi - Vinh railway line, Phu Luong and Lai Vu on the Hanoi - Haiphong railway line, Duong, Thi Cau and Viet Tri on the Hanoi - Dong Dang railway line.



On the main railway networks, 150 km of railway lines have been relaid, 8,000 sq.m. of railway stations rebuilt, the telecommunication network re-established and sidings for parking locomotives and wagons located; as a result, trains have already resumed almost normal services.

700 km of highways have been rebuilt or widened. Thanks to the

In industry, most of the major enterprises were bombed, the hardest hit being the power stations.

Electricity is always the priority branch with the most urgent need for restoration. By as early as April, the principal thermal power stations (in Hanoi, Haiphong, Uong Bi) had been put back in working order. Other thermal power stations (in Vinh, Viet Tri,

Economic Life in the DRVN

1973: FIRST YEAR OF ECONOMIC REHABILITATION

mine-clearing and dredging operations carried out since the first days of peace, river and sea ports including Haiphong port have been in service again.

In late 1973, the amount of movement on the main network of highways, railways and waterways, had essentially recovered its 1971 figure. The tonnage of transported goods increased by 30% compared with 1964.

Thanh Hoa) and the Thac Ba hydro electric stations started functioning. The Ninh Binh thermal power station completed most of its infrastructure work. Some new work has been carried out, including the establishment of a network of several hundred kilometres of electric cables and transformer posts, twenty of which have a capacity of 150,000 kw. The 1973 production of electricity surpassed that of 1965.

In the Quang Ninh region, which was fiercely bombed, mine-clearing has been carried out quickly and in the main completed. In the month of October, the Mao Khe open-cast mines and the washing and sorting factories of Cua Ong, Hong Gai and Vang Danh resumed their operations.

All the *engineering works* which were evacuated during the bombing have been brought back to their former locations and are supplying agriculture and transport with necessary materials.

*The Long Bien bridge
being repaired*



The Thai Nguyen Iron and Steel Complex is now operating two blast furnaces and a coking plant.

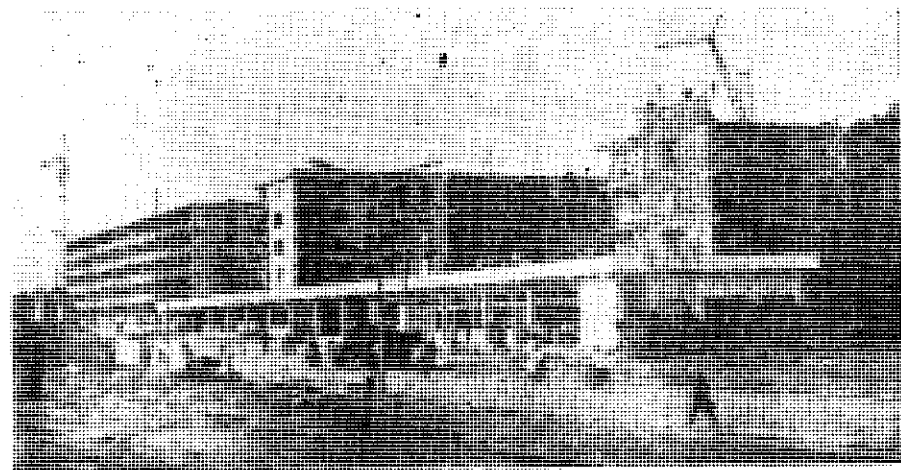
Chemical industry has increased its production by 10% compared with 1965 and the Lam Thao Super-phosphate Plant, the Van Dien Potassium Fertilizer Plant, the electric battery factories, oxygen, acetylene and apatite factories are now in working order. The Ha Bac Nitrogenous Fertilizer Plant has completed its rebuilding work and will start producing in 1974.

To meet the growing need in building materials, the brick factories have raised their production capacity by 20% compared to 1971. The Haiphong Cement Plant, which was bombed many times and 70% destroyed, has partly resumed production.

In light industry, the situation has visibly improved and production has resumed its normal tempo in spite of great difficulties in the supply of raw materials. The Nam Dinh Textile Complex, almost totally destroyed, has rebuilt most of its workshops. The production of the "March 8" Textile Mill has returned to its pre-bombing level. The Viet Tri and Hoang Van Thu Paper Mills, The Van Diem and Viet Tri Sugar Refineries, cigarette, soap and food-processing factories, rice-mills and distilleries are functioning almost normally to supply the market with consumer articles.

Regional industry has been strengthened as an important complement of central industry in the process of restoration and can produce both the means of production and consumer goods. Production in Hanoi has increased by 10% compared with 1970. The other provinces have made considerable progress. Handicrafts, with 3,000 reorganized co-operatives, has contributed greatly to the supply of the internal and export market.

In 1973, agriculture met with great difficulties owing to climatic hazards. After a good winter-spring harvest (all the targets set for acreage, yield, and production being exceeded), great typhoons in September and October following a prolonged drought in July and August, flooded 300,000 hectares in Nam Ha and Hai Hung provinces and



Blocks of flats spring up amidst rice paddies on the outskirts of Hanoi

in the southern provinces. The 10th lunar month crop losses were considerable: cultivated acreage accounted for only 86.2% of the plan; yield, 92.3%, and



production, 80%. In former times this situation would have been catastrophic with the possibility of famine affecting millions of persons.

Despite the scope of the calamities, the damage was limited thanks to the consolidation of the dykes and the strengthening and improvement of hydraulic works. By late 1973, almost all the hydraulic works bombed in 1972 including those of Bai Thuong, Bac Hung Hai and the Clear River had been repaired. During the year, tens of reservoirs and diesel or electric pumping stations were built, which made it possible to irrigate 25,000 more hectares, and increase the acreage where water is under control by 22,500 hectares. The improvement of the combined irrigation systems of Dan-Hoai-

Tu and of the Nhue river (Ha Tay province), of Dong Hung (Thai Binh province), An Thuy and Vinh Bao (outskirts of Haiphong) allowed hundreds of thousands of hectares to be irrigated and drained. The consolidation and repair of dykes required 10 million cubic metres of earth.

In regions not hit by typhoons, the rice situation is better: Thai Binh remains the foremost province for its yields, obtaining 5 tons of paddy per hectare for the two yearly crops on the total acreage; the suburban districts of Hanoi obtained 5.28 tons/ha and those of Haiphong had a 9.3% increase in the average yearly yield compared with 1972; some provinces of the mountainous areas have succeeded for the first time in exceeding the targets set for acreage, yield and production of the 10th-lunar month crop. All this has resulted from the technical improvement carried out for years in agriculture: seed varieties, soil improvement...

Pig raising has made considerable progress with a 4.4% increase compared with the plan target and 9.1% compared with 1972. The four major rice-growing provinces—Nam Ha, Thai Binh, Hai Hung and Thanh Hoa—each have a pig herd of 500,000. With the total number of sows having increased by 26.4% compared with the plan target

(Continued on page 18)



and the TIGER

*The golden radiance of the apricot-tree, the green
leaves of the wild orchid*

These herald the coming of spring, the heroic Tet

NUAN THUY

Tet 1974

FLOWERS walking—a little like Macbeth's forest—blossoming twigs, bouquets held at arm's length moving along at the slow pace of the crowd: shrubs of tiny tangerines, branches of peach blossom, chrysanthemums, camellias, roses, larkspurs, orchids, gladioli, French marigolds,

dahlias, snap-dragons, pansies, nasturtiums... baskets on the pavements, along the decorated stands of a co-operative, and makeshift stalls — a ballet of colours and scents. Day and night, people are moving back and forth in the streets of the flower market. They laugh at everything, at



anything, a jostling, a dazzling flower, a new bodice. Joy may be a need, like rice.

Về quê — to return home; to your native village — is one of the words most frequently heard during Tet. The stations of buses

Along street pavements old men write parallel verses in beautiful characters on dark-red paper



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bound for the provinces of the North are always crowded. The railway station has recovered a certain harmony — big awnings and temporary frames have given a shape to the main building blown off at Christmas 1972 by B-52 bombs. *L'e que*: day and night, as the Festival draws near, the approaches to the station look like the starting line of a gigantic cycle-racing track just before the whistle blows. Hundreds of bikes are lined up along the pavement and the middle of the road all around the station. They are regrouped in front of posters bearing the names of the main centres in the North. With their luggage-carriers loaded with packages, they await the signal to rush onto one of the many trains ready to leave Hanoi with goods vans for bicycles. Familiar outlines around the Lake of Restored Sword are redrawn by thousands of coloured bulbs shining in the night. The water throws back and redoubles the lights of the festival. Stages under the trees, high-land dances, the long drawn-out voice of a monochord amidst fireworks and fire-crackers. On one side of the Lake are the gardens of the Reunification Club. The people sitting on the tiers arrived two hours early so as not to miss the songs and dances of their southern provinces. Regrouped to the North under the provisions of the Geneva Agreements, they gather there, that evening, sometimes alone sometimes with their village or hamlet. Young men crowd around the amusement stands. People are talkative and when they speak of their native places, it is with nostalgia and various local accents. Around the Lake rises a concert of fire-crackers which grows increasingly louder as the night advances. On the water's edge are peddlers selling ices, sweet drinks and jujubes. Children, their throats dried from the dust and the acrid smoke of explosions, queue up.

Under an illuminated tree, the humped back of a trench. On a bulging earthwork a young man is squatting, his hands hanging loosely before his knees, looking down at the laughing, jostling crowd below. On his forehead is a snow-white band of mourning.

At each step, a detonation, one

bank echoes the other in a choir of thunder, rumbling and incessant. As midnight sounds, the noise is deafening with the ending of the year of the Buffalo and the coming of the Tiger, the new



year: it is difficult to hear the loud-speakers, where the voice of Uncle Ho is reading again among the illuminated trees his last Tet message. The bravest ones hold a string of fire-crackers at arm's length; they explode in quick succession and you must

Flowers at Tet

not let go off the string until the last moment. Some saunterers jump at the bangs. Friends reassure them with a pat on the shoulder: "These are the fire-crackers of freedom! They are banned in Saigon!" Others strike in, laughing: "They are afraid they would camouflage the Viet Cong machine-guns." So here this escalation of explosions is doing a double job; they are for people down there!

A young woman with an infinite tenderness in her eyes, has a little boy in her arms. She looks at passers-by and the multicoloured lights above the dark waters, alone, with her child... What cage can break the Tet in a prisoner's heart?

*"Cages for men
who is the tiger
who is the man?"*

MIREILLE GANSEL

Hanoi, Tet 1974

First *Tet in Peace in*

TAN HIEP Prison

"The First Hurrah"

○ N January 25, at 4 p.m. — a historic hour—the news of the signing of the Paris Agreement got through the barbed wire of the blockhouses and the walls of the enceinte and reached us, the 140 people detained in Room A, a room reserved for most of the "die-hards," — that is people from various localities who had refused to give in: ex-resistance members, some of whom already in their seventies, had spent eighteen years in jail ever since the establishment of the fascist Diem regime, patriots forcibly brought back from Thailand, students, intellectuals and other members of the third force.

"Hurrah for peace! Hurrah for peace!"

Our chests expanded and our voices swelled as our cheerfulness and excitement mounted. The ground was too low; we climbed

onto the window-frames; they were still too low, we clambered on the shoulders of our friends so that our voices spread far and wide, resounding, reverberating, ready to lift off the roof of the prison and break the heavy atmosphere of oppression and physical and moral terror. Each prisoner wanted our greetings to the triumph of peace to gush out from hell and mingle with the joyous shouts of the whole Saigon, the whole South Viet Nam, the whole country and the whole world: "Hurrah for peace!" The cry spread to the six rooms of the men's section, then reached the women's section. Two thousand victims, some of the hardest hit by US aggression, were rising up to hail the return of peace.

During the years of oppression we had joined our feeble breaths to shout out our opposition. For the first time now, hurrahs sprang

out from our chests to welcome peace, peace on our beloved war-torn land where enemy posts and prisons had unshroomed.

As usual, the security apparatus was put into gear and a squadron of policemen invaded the jail, armed with ultra-rapid machine-guns, bludgeons, gas masks and tear gas, all ready to rush at us. The torturers, trustees and prison spies went to and fro brandishing their clubs and hammers. But today they were half-heated and their morale evaporated in the fire of our immense joy. For a quarter of an hour, our thundering voices threw them into confusion. At last, Bui Thanh Tam, the director of the prison, hesitatingly made his appearance to give orders to shoot at those who dared to hail peace. The warders, overwhelmed, took fright. As for us, we had been prepared for that event for days. A working committee was formed to demand the implementation of the Agreement.

New Year's Eve Party

Our first concern was to organize the celebrations of the Tet of the Buffalo, the first Tet in peace. Every year, on this occasion, two thousand detainees would receive as alms two young buffaloes which could easily be put on a Lambretta, but would allow the gaolers to charge two head of cattle to the account of US aid, and pocket the money.

We wanted to enjoy Tet as free men. On the morning of January 23, we threw away the compulsory identity plates worn on our clothes, refused to salute the Saigon flag as usual and demanded that all trustees and other scabs leave our rooms. A prisoners' committee was set up with two resistance cadres as president and vice-president and a student as secretary. Seeing our firm resolve, the pack of lackeys who had been hanging around finally went away.

Then we got down to our work. We erected an altar to the Fatherland with a flag, flowers, a peace dove cut from paper and a paper background. The most difficult thing to make was the flag, but we managed it with bits and pieces of blue, red and yellow cloth accumulated from day to day. It was only twenty centimetres long but it shone in our hearts. In order to organize several days of revels we set up a managing committee to pool and distribute the gifts sent by families. Luckily enough, that year we received a much bigger quantity of titbits than the previous Tets, enough for ten days of festivities. We demanded that the prison board allow us to visit comrades in other rooms during Tet, the more so because this Tet was held in peace. If not we threatened to resort to violence. After lengthy discussions, we were given the right to visit detainees in the men's and women's sections. Our prestige was growing. The top gaolers still gave themselves airs but the understrappers could not conceal their fear for the future. Some of them even saw us secretly to plead their cause and beg for clemency.

On the eve of Tet we gathered together to celebrate the passage to the new year and sat chatting at leisure in front of the altar. From time to time, we would stand up and sing in chorus the "Song of Union" so long un-

heard. At exactly midnight, when the bell rang out from a church nearby, we solemnly celebrated the coming of the New Year: we saluted our flag then, turning in the direction of the North, we stood in silent tribute to the memory of Uncle Ho and all the comrades killed on the battlefield or in prison, all those who had sacrificed their lives for us to enjoy, today, a Tet in peace. Here and there was a smothered sob at the thought of the dead, above all of Uncle Ho, of those absent on that day of national rejoicing. Enthusiasm returned with the committee speech extolling the significance of the first Tet in peace which marked the triumph of our people, the withdrawal of the Americans and the recognition of our sovereign rights. As a new year began, a great longing for freedom swelled in our hearts, the longing to return to the struggle and complete the mission entrusted by our people. At that precise moment, I strain-

ed my ears in the silence of the night: there was no sound of guns or bullets, but also no explosion of fire-crackers, the curfew remained in force. We then understood that even if peace had come the struggle had not ended.

Nobody could sleep a wink that night, at the thought of our forthcoming visits in the men's section. How magnificent was this festival of solidarity, this freedom to communicate what we had had to bury so long at the bottom of our hearts! Fearing that our time would be short, we did not talk too long with anyone but passed quickly from one person to another, one subject to another; we became hoarse, out of breath and exhausted, but who would dream of complaining?

In the afternoon, a unicorn dance group made a tour of all the sections. Our hearts beat to the rhythm of drum beats and cymbals and we were transported with joy, happy to have reconquered our place in the sun, among men.

The Shadow of Peace

On the third day of the festival, the gaolers banned all outside visits. This was the signal for our first struggle of the spring. The whole room rushed out into the yard and shouted at the top of their voice "Allow visits and supplies," then as this was persistently refused: "Down with the administration which forbids visits!" The armed police again rushed into the area. But our arguments won the day: the soldiers lowered their weapons, and the bullies and other traitors made

themselves scarce. The bigwigs who avoided meeting us, made it known that the interdiction was raised. As they gave in to us, our prestige was greatly enhanced; we were supported by all the prisoners whose shout seemed about to break up the prison walls.

We were again free to celebrate Tet. We inmates of Room A had a good time for more than ten days: speeches, songs, story telling, poems, plays all through the night. We were greatly amused



by the satire "American bosses and their lackey Nguyen Van Thieu" written and performed by the students. We died of laughing at hearing Thieu bewail his unenviable lot while Nixon was trying to comfort him. Unexpected spectators appeared from time: warders, torturers, trustees and others like them. We should say that during our traditional feast, we did not leave them in the lurch. We gave them some of the gifts of food and those they received from the women's ward were worth thousands of piastres. We wanted that Tet to have the character of national concord which is inherent in our people.

No sooner had the traditional festival come to an end at Tan Hiep than we thought of the forthcoming combat. On February 8, in Room A, we organized the diffusion of the full text of the Paris Agreement, which had reached in through secret channels, and each of us carefully made a copy of it. Later, back in the free zone I was able to check it and found that it did not differ by a single comma from the official text. Meanwhile, our delegates asked for the diffusion of the Agreement. After a first refusal seeing that they could not win the gaolers resorted to a sordid stratagem: they stick the text of the Agreement in the guard-room in the middle of the prison the last place we would ever want to visit. Then we set up a platform where all the speakers

stressed the victory of our people and our resolve to fight for the implementation of the Agreement and our own release. It was the first time in prison that I cried-- for joy.

As we had foreseen, the enemy was quick to recover his balance. On February 23, he blocked up Room A and deprived us of food and drink. At 9 a.m. we shouted our slogans which were taken up by the other rooms. At 11 the enemy gave in, but with an idea at the back of his mind. In fact, the following day, the jackal Bui Thanh Tam, accompanied by Tin in charge of the security service, came to tell us that as political prisoners had to be returned, we must classify ourselves into categories for an immediate regroupment. We promised to reply to them in the afternoon. Diamond cut diamond; we left no stone unturned to prepare for the fight: we agreed to a regroupment, that is to our dispersal to other rooms as we wanted to in order to serve as core for the struggle and incite the others to fight. Immediately, the students, and over 90 other detainees were transferred to Rooms C and G while the six ex resistance members and emigrants from Thailand remained where they were. In the evening, Rooms C and G had each set up a committee and the following day we all threw away our identity plates and refused to salute the Saigon flag: the enemy attacked us the whole morning with blud-

geons and tear gas, and as nobody gave in, at 9 a.m. they took nine men including two of the Saigon students to an unknown destination with their eyes bandaged and their hands bound behind their back.

The struggle at Tan Hiep went on, fiercer than ever, not only against the persecutions and tortures which were little by little exterminating the detainees but also against a new, no less cruel attempt to liquidate the political prisoners. But since spring 1973, with the dawning of peace, all of us had risen up, strengthened by the historic victory of our people. It was precisely in the course of that struggle that my resolution to join the ranks of the revolutionary combatants was consolidated. At the beginning of March, the enemy resorted to another trick: they "released" the ex-resistance members in order to send us to various localities where it would be easier to repress and even liquidate us. It was on the way to one of these that I escaped to the liberated zone. One of my companions is still detained at Quang Ngai; as for the four others I have no idea where they are. The struggle is still going on for those still detained at Tan Hiep as well as for the 200,000 others in South Vietnamese prisons.

VU TIEN DUNG
(former political prisoner in
South Viet Nam)

FACTS AND EVENTS

Children Buried Alive

ON November 18 and 29, 1973, at Pho Phong village, Duc Pho district, Quang Ngai province, men of the 1st Battalion, 5th Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division of the Saigon army, seized 6 children: Nguyen Bang, aged 15; Nguyen Tu, 13; Nguyen Thi Tuoi, 12; Nguyen Nam, 11; Nguyen Lang, 12; and Nguyen Bac, 12. They forced those children to climb up a tree, tortured them and then buried them all alive.

This is not the only "feat of arms" of the division. In more recent days, during their land-grabbing operations against the liberated village of Pho An in the same district (December 7-18, 1973) soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, 4th Regiment of this division, seized and raped 27 women, including Tran Thi Huu, 13 and Nguyen Thi Hoa, 8. At An Thanh village, they arrested and raped Nguyen Thi

Nhu; her mother, Nguyen Thi Thuan, who came to her rescue was shot dead together with her daughter. Four children: Nguyen Ngoc, 12; Pham Son, 10; Pham Tu, 8, and Bui Sam, 7, were plunged into water and then buried shoulder-deep in the ground so as to force them to talk.

The My Lai case in Quang Ngai, during the US occupation, aroused great indignation among Americans and world people. American troops have been withdrawn but Saigon's policy of repressing the movement for freedom and independence remains unchanged, as are the measures for implementing that policy. Massacres of civilians, burning of houses, destruction of gardens and fields, plundering of rice, are crimes committed daily throughout South Viet Nam by the Nguyen Van Thieu clique.

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One Year After the Signing of the Paris Agreement

ON March 8, 1965 to the blaring music of a military band, the GIs of the US expeditionary force landed on the shore of Da Nang (South Viet Nam). Eight years later, on March 29, 1973 at 4: 53 p.m. (Saigon time) four-star General Weyand held a flag-furling ceremony at Tan Son Nhat airbase, the Pentagon East, HQ of the US command in South Viet Nam.

It was a sultry afternoon. General Weyand and Ambassador Bunker together with American officers representing the four arms which had taken part in the Viet Nam war listened to a tape recording of the US anthem. The ceremony lasted only fifteen minutes and one hour later the Americans withdrew, under the scrutinizing eyes of DRVN and PRG army officers.

The War Apparatus Left Behind

Weyand's departure was required under the Paris Agreement which made it clear in Article 4 that the US must end all military involvement in South Viet Nam. But in practice, though the GIs have been repatriated, the whole weaponry has been left in South Viet Nam by the Americans.

Worse still they shipped large quantities of war material to the country just before the cease-fire and have continued to do so all through last year. None of the military bases was dismantled as stipulated in the agreement and, most important of all, a great number of American personnel

The last GIs leaving Da Nang airbase under the supervision of the Four-Party Joint Military Commission.



were left behind who together with the newly introduced personnel total 24,000 men serving in such organs as DAO, SAAFO, USAID and in the consulates and consulates-general. The US is providing commanders and instructors to the Saigon armed forces which now stand at 1.1 million soldiers and 125,000 policemen. Though the US is now working more behind the scenes, this does not prevent the war from continuing, sometimes at a fierce tempo.

Who has advocated that war policy? Thieu has been shouting out threats, but everyone knows that he could not do so without Nixon's consent. A Saigon paper spoke the mind of the Thieu clique when it wrote: "They only wish to see the prolongation of the war. The longer the fighting drags on, the more it brings grist to their mill. They are trailing after foreigners to rake in ill-gotten profits from the sweat and blood of their fellow-countrymen over the wreckage of tanks and planes. They long to see the resumption of the war, because the bombs and shells will bring them more profit" (*Dien Tin*, February 8, 1973).

At a gathering attended by 6,000 civil servants on August 1, 1973, Tran Thien Khiem, Prime Minister of the Saigon administration, said: "Don't let the Paris Agreement shape the destiny of South Viet Nam" and, "Our army

must be resolved to decide the destiny of South Viet Nam." On August 5, 1973, Thieu advanced his "Three Noes": "No peace, no democratic liberties, no national reconciliation and concord." Early in September 1973, Khiem declared: "The Paris accord is worse than a marriage



certificate" (*Dien Tin*, September 12, 1973). Meanwhile he gave orders to the police to "eradicate the enemy's infrastructure" (*Dan Chu*, September 12, 1973).

On September 16, 1973, Thieu ordered his army to intensify attacks to annihilate "Communist bases," blockade the "liberated areas" and launch "preventive strikes," thus rekindling hostilities. On October 30, 1973, attacks were launched against the liberated areas. On January 4, 1974, at Can Tho, Thieu made it clear that "as regards military activities, I can say that the war has been resumed."

A Shattered Economy

But in what conditions is Thieu trying to resume the war? Militarily, the US expeditionary forces, mainstay of the Saigon army, have been withdrawn, and this withdrawal has left behind serious economic consequences.

There was a time when Saigon was flooded with Hondas, TV-sets, refrigerators, tape recorders and other luxury goods supplied by the PX shops. In 1968, the GIs spent over one billion piastres a day in South Viet Nam. But today that artificially induced boom is definitely over and we are seeing the true face of an unproductive society, impoverished and exhausted by the war. *Trang Den* wrote in its Nov. 14, 1973 issue: "The economy of this country is like the body of a drug addict who appears to be healthy when he is given an injection of

heroin, is visibly weakened when his dose is reduced, but when he is suddenly deprived the consequences are unforeseeable."

The two-year plan of "post-war rehabilitation and development" is regarded by Nguyen Van Thieu as a panacea to "retrieve and normalize the living conditions of the war victims" and to "restore production." But he had to admit on August 21, 1973 that "At present increasing difficulties have cropped up in the political situation, and the economic and social problems have also become more difficult to solve." He spoke of "restoring production," but industrial and agricultural production has ground to a halt. For instance, in the first six months of 1973, the weaving branch saw its production drop by 2,000 tons, compared with the same period

of 1972. The production of sugar, cigarettes and soft drinks was also in the same predicament. A slump in production and galloping inflation have of course led to the continuing devaluation of the piastre. In 1955 the official exchange rate was 35 piastres to a dollar. On January 5, 1974 this rate was 560 piastres to a dollar. In 1973, the Saigon piastre was devalued ten times, and the prices of all commodities in the first ten months of the year went up by 100 to 200%, and even higher for some primary goods. On August 5, 1973, three indispensable commodities saw their prices raised by the Saigon administration: rice went up by 55%, sugar 60% and petrol 76%. Of course, the prices were still higher on the black market. On November 20, 1973, the price of petrol was raised once more by another 50%. The prices of nearly all other goods especially primary goods jumped up in the same proportion. The continuously rising price of rice, which has become increasingly scarce, causes serious anxiety for the Saigon population. Now after the oil price rise, the market price of one hundred kilograms of rice is 34,000 piastres (as against 7,600 piastres per 100 kgs at the end of 1972) (*Doc Lap*, Nov. 23, 1973). Nine hundred other commodities increased in price: "Sugar 30% (520 piastres per kilogram), milk by 25 piastres a tin, edible oil 80% (by 600 piastres a tin)" (*Cong Luan*, Dec. 1, 1973).

In 1973, Saigon imported 80 million dollars' worth of petrol (*Dien Tin*, Nov. 5, 1973). After the PLAF attack on the three big fuel depots at Nha Be, there was an acute shortage of oil, and 200 filling stations had to close down. The energy crisis worsened.

In 1973, the Saigon budget deficit was 116 billion piastres (a shortage of 78 billion was further recorded at the end of the year); and in 1974 the figure is 177 billion. Meanwhile, Nguyen Van Thieu obdurately goes on with the war. In 1973, military expenditure ate up more than half the budget, and in 1974, out of the 630 billion piastres budgeted, 320 billion or more than half are earmarked for military expenditure. This does not include US military aid. Ha Xuan Truong, the Saigon administration's Minister of Finance, admitted: "In 1973, to cover the budget expenditure of 490 billion piastres (raised afterwards to 510 billion) the GVN

had 109 billion or 39% from taxes, 140 billion from foreign aid, or 29%, and 160 billion, or 32%, from inflation."

Anticipated at 160 billion in June 1973 inflation ran to 240 billion piastres, or nearly 50% of the budget (this deficit did not include 60 billions of public debts). From 51 billion in January 1966, the money in circulation had seven years later (in January 1973) risen to 202.8 billion or 4 times more. From 200 million in 1972, Saigon's foreign currency reserves had dropped to 100 million dollars in 1973. After the withdrawal of the GIs, the currency exchanged by the US Department of Defense with the Thieu administration in 1973 amounted to 130 million dollars or 100 million less than in 1972.

Thieu hoped to see US aid increased. But his trip to Washington in April 1973 was disappointing to him. Nixon was entangled in the Watergate scandal, a gloomy economic situation was prevailing in the US and many congressmen were afraid of another involvement in Viet Nam; consequently US aid did not exceed 260 million dollars in the 1973-1974 fiscal year as against 500 million in 1972 (*Dai Dan Toc*, Nov. 22, 1973). In West European countries Thieu fared no better. He was regarded as "an uninvited guest." About Thieu's trip, MP Pham Van Tan remarked: "Never has such an ignominious page been written in the diplomatic history of the Vietnamese people" (Statement made before the "Saigon Senate" on April 18, 1973). The aid granted by France was derisory, that of Japan was only on paper, while the "Asian Development Bank" has done nothing for Saigon.

As foreign aid could not offset the budget deficit, Thieu resorted to the selling dirt cheap of the country's natural resources. First, he granted prospecting rights to American, Japanese and Canadian companies for 16.6 million dollars. He also invited foreign companies to make investments on favourable terms, but obtained only 6 million dollars which exist only on paper, as in the present circumstances, nobody is foolish enough to sink money in business ventures in South Viet Nam.

Thieu then tried another solution: running gambling dens and brothels. This is now part of his "State policy." In this con-

nection *Dien Tin* wrote on July 26, 1973: "The Ministries of Social Welfare, Planning and Finance have worked out regulations to make tenders for the construction of international amusement centres with gambling of all kinds from tossing coins to roulette."

But this "State policy" brings nothing good to the Saigon economy and finances. Tax increase and inflation remain the principal means of robbing the people. Since the beginning of 1973, all taxes have gone up: shop tax, licence, income tax (by 5 times), tax on transport (15 times) and other



taxes, such as printing tax, from 2 to 40 times. (*Tin Sang*, April 21, 1973). Many industrial and commercial firms have gone bankrupt such as the "Tin Nghia Credit Bank" (closed on April 21, 1973) and the Alpha Film Company (closed on April 27). Taxes also strike wage-earners: workers pay 20% and civil servants 15% of their wages. On July 1, 1973, the Saigon administration created a new value added tax which hit all commodities and all sections

of the population. According to the Saigon press, within 40 days VAT had robbed the townspeople of 5.2 billion piastres.

As the opposition to VAT reached its peaks, on August 9, 1973, the Saigon administration stopped collecting that tax from a number of activities such as: small industries, agriculture, transport, education, health service and social welfare, the press... and therefore lost a good part of the 70 billion piastres expected from the taxation.

According to the Saigon papers, on November 22, 1973, Thieu increased the equalization tax on 200 imported articles. On November 27, 1973 *Dai Dan Toc* wrote: "The new equalization tax is to supersede the devilish VAT and the taxes on landed properties (houses, gardens, ricefields). The inhabitants are like moribund patients exhausted by taxes and the price hike."

In 1973 Thieu collected 126 billion piastres from taxes and in 1974 he contemplates a revenue of 247 billion. "The higher the taxes, the more the money the [Thieu] administration gets to serve its war purpose; the more hungry the people, the more money the administration has to squander... But man's endurance has a limit. To what extent can our people's forbearance be strained?" (Bulletin No. 11 released in Saigon by a group of Saigon MPs).

A Declining Society

With his "reconstruction programme" Thieu promised jobs to the workers. This is an empty promise. After the withdrawal of the GIs 100,000 employees of American firms and offices were out of a job. The enterprises of construction and repair of buildings to be let to the Yankees saw their income sink to the lowest point, and tens of thousands of bricklayers and carpenters were thrown out of employment. As the volume of goods handled has diminished, tens of thousands of dockers are now idle. The closing of night clubs, dancing-halls, Turkish bathrooms has thrown tens of thousands of barmaids and hostesses out into the streets. Meanwhile the jobless workers have not been able to return to their native villages

because the war was continuing. As a result of Thieu's policy, over one million peasants are penned up in "settlement centres" and "refugee camps" where they live on government allowances.

The rank of jobless people is swollen by the war invalids from various battlefronts, totalling "over two million" according to *Dai Dan Toc* of September 19, 1973. But *Dien Tin* of September 27 quoted the Saigon authorities as saying that "The figure is in fact higher." On January 2, 1974, Saigon newspapers reported that in industry, there is a 40% unemployment as a result of the energy crisis. Some basic industries such as the manufacturing of cloth, soap and rubber affected by the recent import ban,

are contemplating the dismissal of 30% of their workers after Tet. Thus to the present two million workers laid off will be added hundreds of thousands of others. "The unemployment which prevails at present is not temporary as some people believe, but must last a long time" *Dai Dan Toc*, August 7, 1973).

Today, to find a job, any job, in Saigon or other cities in South Viet Nam, is a problem. What can these jobless do? Thousands of them display their small piles of wares on the sidewalks for sale. Others hire themselves as carriers or porters and will do any work to earn their living. One door is wide open to them: the army.

Theft, hold-ups, prostitution, drug addiction, beggary, corruption, etc., these are now major social scourges. Visiting Saigon, a foreign journalist said: "While yesterday Saigon was regarded as the 'Paris of the East' or the 'Pearl of the Far East' it is today the city of disgust. Its slums are full of destitute people who live on the heaps of garbage piled up along the sidewalks. What a ghastly sight!" (Reportage on Saigon in *Life in Warsaw*, Poland)

"Beggary, theft, corruption, hold-ups, blackmail, kidnapping and murder, are common. Many of the youth and adolescents have been forced to give up their studies and to hire themselves as servants or become prostitutes. Mothers leave their new-born babies on the pavement. Whole families commit suicide by poison... In the chaotic society of Saigon the gap between the rich and the poor is wider than ever before" (*Gio Moi*, Bulletin of Vietnamese residents in Paris, Sept. 8, 1973).

Here is what *Dai Dan Toc* (Saigon) wrote on Dec. 5, 1973 about the corruption of the youth in the South:

"The number of juvenile delinquents is constantly increasing: an eight-year-old kid in rags and



tatters, knows how to sneak into the crowd to pick pockets; another one, 12, as pale as death, with a haggard look and tousled hair, yawns his head off, for lack of drugs; a third one, only 13, in tatters, steals 20 eggs in the middle of the market... All that is painful to look at. Many children who are living with their families have also become delinquents because they are too poor, deprived of education and have been corrupted by other children."

Fascization of Political Life

What Thieu dislikes most in the heritage left by the Americans is the Paris Agreement which rules that the domestic affairs of South Viet Nam should be settled on the basis of the existence of two administrations, two armies, two zones of control and three political forces. The accord also stipulates that the two sides should ensure democratic liberties and the release of civilian detainees. All this is unacceptable to Thieu.

To ensure democratic liberties means that "the population may move freely between the two zones of control... and this means a total disintegration of President Thieu's ranks." (1) No wonder that while "one of the two South Vietnamese parties does its best to popularize the full text of the agreement by all possible means, the other is reluctant to make it public and keeps distorting the facts." (2) "One can say at once which side will benefit and which side will be harmed by the strict implementation of the Paris Agreement." (3)

One day before the signing of the Paris Agreement, Thieu said: "As for all our affairs, laws, and administration, we will do exactly as in the past, nothing is changed..." Without any more ado he saddled the population under his sway with fascist decree-laws

contrary to the accord. Immediately after the agreement was signed, Thieu issued decrees allowing military courts to try civilian cases and declared a "state of emergency" which allowed his men to shoot dead on the spot any man they chose. In March 1973, he speeded up the "pacification" programme to "purge" and arrest people. He sent policemen to the poorer districts of the city to take photographs of the inhabitants, make records on individuals and families, set up watch-towers and organize "people's self-defence" in order to keep close watch on the inhabitants, force them to hoist the three-stripe flag, to paint these colours on their dwellings, to write on their doors anti-Communist slogans. With regard to government services, Thieu has issued a decree law on eight security measures which are in fact repressive and preventive measures. With regard to the business enterprises, he has instructed their owners to require from their workers three declarations on their personal records, to sack the "blemished" ones, and for surveillance he has posted his own men disguised as workers.

On May 12, 1973, four months after the coming into force of the Paris Agreement, Thieu signed Decree-law 020 to set up "security

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committees" which are nothing but organizations for assassination and terrorism. "The so-called Security Committees which are maintained are empowered to arrest or deport those regarded as dangerous for the Saigon administration, without any evidence or condemnation by a tribunal or a juridical organ. The duration of deportation ordered by these committees is two years but can be indefinitely renewed. Freedom of association, freedom of organization, freedom of political activities — all these are simply ignored by Thieu's administration. To cross over to the areas under PRG control for a visit to parents, or to look after the ancestors' tombs, is a crime" (*Doi Dien* review, June 1973).

To quell the resistance of the population, Thieu has launched large-scale mopping-up operations codenamed "For the people," "Truth," "The Road to Freedom." In each of these operations, hundreds of persons were killed, tens of thousands of others arrested. According to the Saigon press in the ten days after the signing of the Joint Communiqué (from June 15 to 25, 1973), the Saigon administration carried out nearly 2,000 police operations, purged over 60,000 persons, tortured and apprehended hundreds of others. On July 15, 1973 alone, 395 raids were made during which 45,962 people were arrested.

Since the beginning of December 1973, the Saigon administration has stepped up these operations to repress the population in various districts of Saigon. In Phuong Kach Ong (8th District), in the first ten days of December a dozen company-sized police raids were carried out.

It is not only the masses but also all the political parties who are regarded by Thieu as his enemies. And so he has left nothing undone which could help him

to cling to his president's seat. On February 23, 1973, he set up the "Popular Front for Peace and the Right to National Self-Determination." Over one month later, he created the "Democratic Party" led by him. At the founding session he declared: "The Democratic Party is the barometer of anti-Communism." He compels everybody to join the Party and show loyalty to the regime, and he threatens to dismiss or transfer those who refuse to do so. "The inhabitants and civil servants or military men who want to enjoy privileges and to be immune from threats and terror have to join the Democratic Party" (*Doi Dien*, June 1973). On May 16, 1973, the Saigon Ministry of the Interior issued a decree banning 26 political parties in South Viet Nam. On July 10, 1973 Thieu launched an "administrative revolution" to militarize the civil servants and also to discard those who are not to his liking. Besides, he dismissed many generals and field officers, and compelled them to resign or brought them up for trial before a military court on charges of "corruption" or "inefficiency." Many civil servants suffered the same fate.

In August 1973, Thieu held "partial elections" to the Saigon "Senate" to renew one-half of that body, with the aim of ousting those who did not see eye to eye with him and putting in his own men. This is a manoeuvre to pave the way for his third five-year presidential term. To this end, on January 19, 1974, he had a draft



The Nha Be oil depot near Saigon shelled by PLAF artillery: 140,000 tons of fuel went up in flames.

amendment to the Constitution passed by a National Assembly mostly made up of members who are at his beck and call.

Unavoidable Disintegration

One year has passed since the signing of the Paris Agreement. A review of the activities of the Saigon administration in 1973 shows that Thieu was right when he said on January 13, 1973:

"If the Americans let us down it will be the end, the real end, and there will be nothing left to say."

Even if the Americans do not let him down, Thieu must be aware

of his shaky position. He is being submerged little by little by a human sea which has been surging up after the signing of the Paris accord. Thieu's "land-grabbing" plan financed and directed by Americans has suffered severe setbacks. In less than one year, 240,000 Saigon troops were put out of action. Encroaching and "pacification" operations were duly punished even at their staging bases—the airbase at Bien Hoa, the petrol depots at Nha Be and Long Binh and the Pleiku ammunition dumps. The Saigon troops' morale is sagging: anti-war demonstrations and mutinies were frequent in 1973. According to still incomplete figures, within ten months 140,000 men defected individually or collectively.

In the countryside and the periphery of the towns under Saigon control, the inhabitants have been fighting against heavy taxation, looting and exploitation, for freedom of movement, and permission to return to their native villages, against crime, forced enlistment in the army and regroupment and for the return of the

soldiers to their families, for peace and national concord.

The townsfolk are also fighting for their immediate interests. Workers are striking for wage increases and supplies of rice and against sacking. They belong to various branches: railways, water and electricity, fuel, the docks, road transport and the airways, the car industry, factories for canned foods, batteries, textiles, rubber and fertilizers, hospitals, and even DAO office. Traders and petty officials fight against taxes and prices. The intellectuals, well-known personalities, civil servants, army men, journalists, artists and even MPs are drawn into the

struggle. Slogans have been displayed during many demonstrations demanding the implementation of democratic liberties, peace and national concord and protesting against the fascization of the administration. Many actions have been crowned with success: the railway workers obtained payment of 160 million piastres owed to them since 1970, the guarantee of a minimum salary and the release of 21 trade-union cadres; the mass movement has compelled Thieu to suppress VAT in some sectors; Mme Ngo Ba Thanh has been released, etc. These initial successes are a good start for the coming development of the struggle of the urban population.

The Thieu administration is still there. But the factors leading to its disintegration and collapse are increasing with every passing day.

THANH NAM

(1), (2), (3) Violations of Peace, published on Nov. 1, 1973 in Paris by deputy Ngo Cong Duc.



(Continued from page 7)

and 17.2% compared to 1972, the structure of the herd has gradually changed. The weight of pigs has also been raised by 9.5% on an average. Family pig-breeding, still the main sector with an 8.1% increase in the number of pigs over 1972, has known a certain development: in 1973, 85% of the peasant households raised 1.5 pigs on average each. Co-operative breeding in 19 provinces has increased by 8.5% compared with last year. These results will help livestock-breeding modernize itself and progressively become an activity independent of cultivation. Immediately 7,000 more tons of meat have been supplied to the market than in 1972.

In State farms, land reclamation and the bringing of new land under cultivation have been carried out over wide areas. 15,000 more hectares have already been reserved for perennial industrial crops: coffee, tea, pineapple, mulberry and orange.

To improve the people's living standard is always one of the fundamental objectives of the

Economic Life in the DRVN

regime. In this field, the task is most difficult as demographic growth is high. However, the State is trying to restrict the people's privations as much as possible. Beside the regular supply of foodstuffs and other daily consumer articles, housing constitutes a crucial and urgent problem. Apart from the damaged houses which have been repaired, the town and province administrations have built 400,000 sq.m. of thatch houses and 60,000 sq.m. of brick houses (including 10,000 sq.m. of prefabricated multi-storeyed houses). These figures do not take into account houses built by the people themselves.

Attention has also been given to the training of skilled workers and technical and managerial cadres: in 1973 the number of workers recruited into professional schools increased by 50% compared with 1972.

The improvement of economic

management which was interrupted in 1972 has been resumed in industrial enterprises, handicraft co-operatives and agricultural co-operatives with a view to stabilizing and putting in order production upset by the war.

It should be noted that education and cultural life continued to develop during the war; for a year now they have made even more rapid progress.

Considering the seemingly insurmountable obstacles (the scope of destructions, the shortage of raw materials, power, fuel, equipment, skilled workers, technique...) the results obtained in 1973 in economic rehabilitation are encouraging. Much remains to be done but those first successes constitute a starting-point of great importance and make it possible for national reconstruction to progress at a quicker tempo in the years to come.

VU QUOC TUAN

VIET NAM COURIER

Obstacles to the Formation of the Provisional National Union Government in Laos

THE Vientiane Agreement on Laos was signed on February 21, 1973. More than six months later, the Protocol was also signed (Sept. 11, 1973). The provisions of the cease-fire order have largely been carried out. In mid-December, the patriotic forces' men and material were sent to Vientiane and Luang Prabang to put into effect the neutralization of these two cities. A Central Joint Commission for the implementation of the Agreement was set up and its programme of action has been agreed upon.

However, the implementation of many provisions of the Agreement and of the Protocol has been carried out slowly and incompletely.

The Vientiane troops, aided and abetted by the United States, have launched many nibbling attacks against the liberated areas in Xieng Khouang, Kham Muoane, Savannakhet, Saravane and the North-West of Laos.

US planes have been carrying out reconnaissance flights over Lao territory and the Americans are still supplying war material to the Vientiane side and maintaining in Laos 20 battalions of Thai troops integrated among the Lao troops or simply disguised under the label of Vientiane army units.

The neutralization of Vientiane and Luang Prabang, a prerequisite for the formation of the Provisional National Union Government and the National Coalition Political Council, has met with numerous obstacles caused by the Vientiane side.

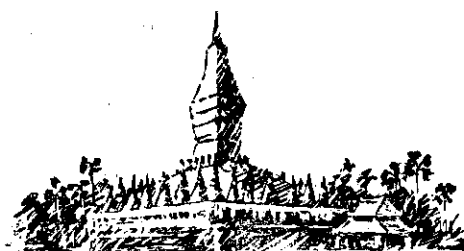
The Patriotic Forces' military and police forces have been sent to Vientiane and Luang Prabang, but they have not yet been provided with adequate working conditions and in fact, they have been virtually encircled by the much larger Vientiane armed forces including armed forces and organizations not recognized by the Vientiane Agreement and the Protocol. They have often been provoked by T-28 and L-19 planes taking off from airbases in these two cities and by Vientiane psywar agents.

The Vientiane side even argues that the Patriotic Forces' military and police units in Vientiane and Luang Prabang have only the task of protecting the representatives of the Sam Neua side in the Provisional National Union Government and the National Coalition Political Council, when according to the Protocol these forces are to take part in maintaining order and security in the two cities. Prince Souvanna Phouma has demanded many times that the Patriotic Forces send immediately a list of the proposed Ministers and Vice-Ministers of the Provisional National Union Government and mem-

bers of the National Coalition Political Council. He considers the presence of the Diplomatic Corps, the ICCS members and foreign newsmen as an important guarantee for their security in these two cities. But experience from the formation of the previous National Concord Governments (1957 and 1963-1964) has shown that the presence of foreigners, whether diplomats, ICCS members or newsmen, cannot prevent sabotage activities by reactionary elements inside or outside the country and some foreigners have even helped the extreme rightists in their sabotage activities. It was for these reasons that the newly signed documents have laid emphasis on concrete measures for ensuring the genuine neutralization of the two cities so that they would not be under the sole control of either side, and the normal work of the Provisional National Union Government and the National Coalition Political Council. As long as these measures have not been carried out, the discussion for the setting up of these two organs cannot enter into details. Certainly, nobody on the Patriotic side wants to suffer the fate of Mr Quinim Pholsena, a neutralist patriotic Foreign Minister who was assassinated on April 1, 1963 in the rightist-controlled city of Vientiane.

As the two sides in Laos are on an equal footing one side cannot demand that the other submit a list of its own people as mentioned above. It is also possible that once in possession of the list provided by the Sam Neua side, Vientiane would declare that the Provisional National Union Government and the National Coalition Political Council have been set up, so as to mislead public opinion at home and abroad.

The good will of the US and the Vientiane side in the settlement of the Lao problem and the formation of the Provisional National Union Government and the National Coalition Political Council will be gauged by their attitude in carrying out the genuine neutralization of the two cities of Vientiane and Luang Prabang.



Like Its Shadow

ON December 22, 1973 the Phnom Penh High Command disclosed that there had been a big robbery. The culprits were none other than a score of officers and NCOs. Their ill-gotten gains — copper shells — had been sold and the sum divided and put in the offenders' pockets. The ringleaders, who included General Takeo and two colonels commanding the Koh Kong and Kampot military sub-sectors respectively, were degraded and the rest, subordinate officers and NCOs, taken into custody.

This is just one affair, which has been publicly made known. In fact theft and contraband are routine occupations among the high-ranking officials of the Cambodian puppet administration.

Recently there was the affair of the Phnom Penh army's "phantom soldiers" who existed only on the paylists. Thanks to those "soldiers" lots of officers led a luxurious life and many subordinate officers with a low pay, about 10,000 *riels* a month (under 30 dollars, according to the current exchange rate in Phnom Penh), became owners of million-*riel* Mercedes. Others put their real soldiers' pay in their pockets or delayed the payment

three or four months so as to use it for their own expenses. This has aroused many protests among the puppet army.

Meanwhile the heads of the civil service have not been sitting idly by: Keng Keng, ex-Minister of the Economy (in 1972), embezzled millions of *riels* from US aid, Kim Hong, Oung Hiem and Um Tram-pek, in charge of collecting tax in Phnom Penh, pocketed 56 million *riels* from the 1971-1972 land tax of the city.

The Phnom Penh leaders have been compelled to penalize the most scandalous cases, sometimes using this as an opportunity to purge their opponents. Certainly this does not mean that they are honest men. For instance: UPI revealed on March 3, 1973 that the wife of General Lon Non, Lon Nol's sister-in-law, had transferred 92 million dollars taken from US aid to a foreign bank. The Phnom Penh daily which revealed this was closed down.

Theft, smuggling, bribery, etc., are not only rampant in Phnom Penh.

In Saigon, "Vice-President" Tran Van Huong has admitted that "civil servants at central as well as regional level vie with

each other in the filth of embezzlement... tax-collectors pocket the public money... the security forces, accustomed to swindling and embezzlement, try by all means to bring about difficulties for the people" (Saigon Radio, Feb. 9, 1972). And General Ngo Dzu's scandalous smuggling activities, Defence Minister Nguyen Van Vy's embezzlement of the savings-bank and army aid relief, are obvious to everybody.

In Bangkok a special commission, set up on November 10, 1973 after the overthrowing of Thanom Praphas' cabinet, revealed that Thanom Kittikachorn, his son Narong Kittikachorn, and Praphas Charusathien have some 217.01 million *bahts* (equal to 10.750 million dollars) in the Bank of Bangkok aside from their enormous sums in foreign banks.

What conclusion may we draw? Stealing, bribery and smuggling are the products of US neo-colonialism. It tolerates them as a way of forming a pack of lackeys devoted to the dollar and to Washington. Corruption follows neo-colonialism like its shadow.



Forthcoming

ANTHOLOGIE DE LA LITTÉRATURE VIETNAMIENNE

(Tome II)

Editions en langues étrangères — Hanoi, 1973



What the critics said about Volume I:

* (One of) the four books of most help in understanding the determination of a nation... The land and people of Viet Nam, its masters and its invaders come to life in these beautifully translated texts... Along the centuries a wonderful culture has been built up which is the best rampart against foreign aggression.

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Le Monde diplomatique
January 1973

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Tel quel — 1973

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Le Nouvel observateur
January 22-28, 1973

Reorganization of Commercial Services

AS B-52'S RAIDED HANOI

AT the beginning of 1973 after eight years of US bombing, the prices of staple foodstuffs fixed by the State Trading Service remained just the same as they had been in 1965, before the war:

- 0.40 dong a kilogram of rice
- 1.70 dong a metre of material
- 2.40 dong a kilogram of pork
- 0.40 dong a litre of kerosene

In 1972, at the height of the B-52 bombardments, the retail price index was 99.6%, compared with those of 1971, when the bombardments were suspended; the exact figures are 97% for cereals, 99% for other foodstuffs and 94% for pork. How did the Hanoi trading services manage to maintain such a relatively stable cost of living, so contributing to the common victory?

The First Difficulties

The beginning of 1972 was marked by the after-effects of the 1971 floods and many years of US bombing. The Tet festival in February caused a heavy consumption of foodstuffs and in April Nixon resumed the bombing.

This time the air raids hit with unprecedented violence. The enemy concentrated its attacks on bases of production, systems of communication and distribution of goods, and blockaded sea ports and river ports and the sea coast in general — a blockade which was not without effect although the country made continuous efforts to be self-sufficient in con-

sumer goods in order to limit imports.

New needs made themselves felt. The State made an urgent appeal for considerable manpower and it had to cater for the immediate needs of these men: rice, meat, matches, tobacco, etc.

In the space of a few days, hundreds of thousands of people evacuated Hanoi. Each of them tried to find such indispensable commodities as packing materials, rope and straps so as to pack his things: haversacks, petrol cans, flasks, waterproof cloth, tyre sandals, flash-lights, kerosene and lamps (the demand for kerosene tripled), dark-coloured cloth or dye-stuffs to neutralize bright colours for camouflage purpose, medicines and dressings for first aid care, dried food, bicycles, blankets, the individual mosquito-nets required by the dispersal of members of one family and enamel bowls, less cumbersome than chinaware.

To this list should be added the collective needs of evacuated public services, enterprises, schools, hospitals, kindergartens.

All that was done when, despite some improvement, the material and technical bases of Hanoi's commercial services left a lot to be desired: means of transport were rudimentary (small hand-carts, pedicabs); old-fashioned methods were used to slaughter cattle and process foodstuffs; weighing was done by ordinary scales... Eighty per cent of the personnel were women. How, in these conditions, could the customers, dispersed around the city or evacuated, sometimes to places one hundred kilometres from the capital, be served?

Goods continued to be brought to enterprises and offices for sale to the employees.



Increasing Supplies

The yearly supplies of the Hanoi State Trading Service usually included reserve stocks; supplies provided by the central administration, either directly or through the provincial administrations; supplies obtained through collection or by the processing industry (on the spot or in the provinces).

Before the resumption of the bombardments, the commercial services had preserved the stocks and maintained the stores built during the period of Johnson's bombing in good order. Many new warehouses had been set up in the evacuation zones. In April 1972, these were enlarged and others were built. Numbering a few hundred at the outset there were now several thousand stores, covering hundreds of thousands of square metres. These were scattered and housed in solid underground shelters, which made it possible to reduce to the minimum the damage caused by US bombardments. Cadres were sent there to receive the goods as soon as they arrived and to take all the necessary measures in good time such as asking for replacement stocks and mobilizing transport means. Everything was put to use: bicycles, carts, boats, shoulder-yokes...

Everything went on smoothly and the volume of goods doubled compared with the previous year.

Other cadres were sent to various provinces to collect products and direct them to Hanoi. They were also to receive the surplus foodstuffs from the provinces where consumption was lower than had been envisaged by the central administration. These foodstuffs were scattered and difficult to preserve and to transport: vegetables, tubers, fruit, oysters, shellfish, shrimp brine, arrowroot vermicelli, and tapioca. The foodstuffs collected from the provinces, which represented over 30% of the total volume, were processed on the spot to curtail transportation cost.

To help on rice production, Hanoi supplied the farmers with fertilizers, seeds and manufactured goods, and to organize their

purchase more efficiently and at fair prices. This induced the peasants to sell an additional quantity of goods to the State besides the fixed quota. Thus the summer crop exceeded the plan's targets by 67% and the autumn by 116%. Hanoi signed more contracts for food supplies with the co-operatives. It also supplied them with fertilizers, farm tools, industrial goods, even foodstuffs to co-operatives not producing rice and paid fair prices for the products delivered beside the fixed quotas, which encouraged farmers not only to meet the contracts, but also to overfulfil them. The result was that the annual purchasing plan was exceeded: tomato:

+289 tons, beans: +242 tons; compared with the previous year, the purchases increased by 12.9% for pigs, 24.6% for poultry, 173% for eggs. Foodstuffs were processed by the commercial services: soya bean curds, cold dishes, sauces, fish brine.

The city bought local manufactured goods and handicraft products and disposed of them quickly. It supplied the co-operatives with raw materials and collected their manufactured goods to promote the development of subsidiary occupations. Thus, despite US bombing and the difficulties it caused to industrial production, the value of local industrial and handicraft products purchased nearly equalled that of 1971.

Planned Distribution

In the existing circumstances Hanoi had to restructure its network and its mode of distributing goods.

The State Trading Service kept its leading role and took charge of wholesale and retail trade in the city, other urban centres and evacuation zones. Up to then, the supply and marketing co-operatives in the suburbs had been the sole representative of the State Trading Service in the supply of manufactured goods to the farmers. They now supplied the inhabitants evacuated from urban centres with foodstuffs and manufactured goods. The number of agents of the State Trading Service and co-operatives in public organs increased as well as the range of selling-points were reduced in the town and increased in the areas of dispersal to serve the evacuees. Each had one or two emergency selling-places to cater for the inhabitants on a permanent basis in case of bombardment. There was a fair development in travelling sales. The number of selling-points varied, increasing or decreasing according to the intensity of the bombing. The greatest number was at the time Hanoi was pounded by B.52s (compared with 1971, the number of itinerant sale units was five

times higher).

To reduce material and human losses, the stores were supplied each time with only two or three days or even one day's supply of goods.

The opening hours were also constantly changing so as to avoid the hours when the enemy planes usually raided. Collective purchases were encouraged and a calendar was fixed for on-the-spot sales in public services and enterprises. Rationed goods were now delivered every three months instead of every month thus saving time for the population and reducing the need for warehouses.

Moreover, underground shelters were built for goods as well as for the people. A defence regulations on measures to be taken in case of bombardment were drawn up and publicized.

As in the past, the State continued to manage and distribute the staple foods. The price and quantity of rice, meat, sugar, textiles supplied to each category of customer remained unchanged. Prices were also maintained at a constant level for various freely sold items: salt, soap, vegetables, fruit, etc. The quantity of such products sold on the free market available to each customer was

A street vendor's cart



sometimes limited and their sale was entrusted to the consumption co-operatives in enterprises or public services so as to avoid speculation.

The dual price formula was still maintained (except for basic cereals): a reduced price for quotas of rationed products, a higher price for purchases in excess of the ration. That duality of prices made it possible to fight efficiently against fluctuations in the free market and to help stabilize the market and check profiteering. That price stability was also the result of educative work among the people who were

taught to practise economy, and advised to buy such a product in such a quantity only when there was a real need, and not to grab the goods at any price just so as to keep a reserve stock. A barrier was thus erected against speculation.

An Excellent Personnel

The brutal B-52 raids from December 18 to 29, 1972 destroyed up to 10% of the warehouses, stores, breeding centres and enterprises for the processing of foodstuffs of the Hanoi trading services.

The task of the cadres and workers was understandably hard and full of sacrifices. They had to stick to their stores day and night in order to preserve the goods which were evacuated during air alerts to underground shelters. They shot at the planes; and when the enemy was away, they sought to repair, if need be, the damage caused by bombs and reopened their shops. One example: A catering store was hit on December 27, 1972 at 2 a.m. When the explosions were over, the salesmen who were buried under the rubble struggled out, their clothes tattered and stained with fish brine and lard. After recovering their breath and changing their clothes, they set to work, some immediately going to pick up the scattered goods,

the others to open at 5 a.m. an emergency shop nearby.

In order to cater for the inhabitants remaining in Hanoi, the slaughter-houses were divided into smaller units and scattered in various parts of the city. When there was a power failure, small generating sets were set in operation. The lack of running water was offset by the sinking of wells. Though the means used were rudimentary, the meat supply could be maintained even under the bombing.

Day and night, hundreds of employees transported crates of eggs, bundles of vegetables, or cases of beer on rudimentary vehicles, bicycles, bamboo yokes to enterprises and gun emplacements.

The employees in charge of purchase and transport kept close to the bases of production in the suburbs or in far-away provinces to buy products: turnips from Thai Binh, tomatoes from Ha

Bac, oranges from Nghe An, fish from Quang Ninh... And all along their road to Hanoi they had to face violent air raids.

Thus, despite heavy bombardments, the commercial services satisfied the needs of the 700,000 citizens, although these needs were far above those in normal conditions. They maintained price level and satisfactorily served production and combat. That was the result of the experience learnt from the years of Johnson's war escalation, the zeal of their staff and the assistance of the population.

They also built up stocks after the cease-fire to meet the needs of the population during the 1973 Tet Festival. On that occasion, the sale of pork (above the rationing quotas), *banh chung* (1) and fire crackers doubled, and that of flowers increased by 50% compared to previous Tets.

One can imagine what the prices and cost of living would have been if capitalist trade were prevailing in the DRVN, a poor, relatively small country devastated for years by heavy bombardments. Unquestionably, the socialist system and socialist commerce have contributed a great deal to the consolidation of the rear.

NGUYEN YEM

(1) Glutinous rice cake.

IN THE MOUNTAIN REGIONS

The School Infrastructure

IN December 1973, nearly 200 delegates from all mountain provinces in North Viet Nam attended the Fourth Education Conference to review and assess the progress of the educational movement in the mountain regions in the past years.

Whereas, formerly there was not a single second-level school in the regions bordering China and Laos, nowadays all the provinces and many districts have third-level schools. The number of schoolchildren of minority nationalities is increasing every year. In the 1972-73 school-year 17,500 children attended alphabet classes, and there were over 340,000 first-level, nearly 40,000 second-level and over 6,000 third level pupils. Schools are seen in every village even in the remotest regions.

In the 1971-1972 school-year, the number of schoolchildren increased by 230,000 in comparison with the school-year 1964-1965 (when the US began its war of

destruction against North Viet Nam). Colleges or higher education courses have been opened in a number of places, for instance the Viet Bac (I) Teachers' Training College, the Viet Bac Medical Faculty in Bac Thai province.

Complementary classes and schools for young minority people have been opened in most provinces and in many districts. In the previous years, there were only 64 of such schools for minority youth with over 1,000 pupils, in the 1971-1972 school-year there were over 100 schools with 8,170 pupils. During the past ten years, these schools in the Viet Bac Autonomous Region provided first- or second-level general education to 12,000 minority youth who were to work in the administrative committees and other organizations of villages, districts and provinces. Many of these young people have become middle or higher-level cadre for technical, educational, medical or cultural work.

At present, almost all mountain provinces have their own teachers' schools training first-level school teachers and many provinces have schools training second-level teachers, some of which have up to 1,000 students. Consequently the number of teachers in the mountain regions for all three education levels is increasing rapidly: in comparison with 1964-1965, the number of first-level teachers in the 1973-1974 school-year has increased 1.5 times, that of the second-level, 2 times and the third-level—3 times. A salient feature of this movement is the rapid proportional increase of minority teachers.

However, the educational work is developing unevenly in the mountain regions and even slowly in some places. Occasionally in certain highland regions there are still people who do not go to school, thus illiteracy is not yet liquidated.

The Conference has worked out urgent and effective measures to overcome such shortcomings.



*

A lesson given in the Meo language. Both teacher and schoolchildren are members of this ethnic group.



*A hydro-electric power station
in the mountain region*

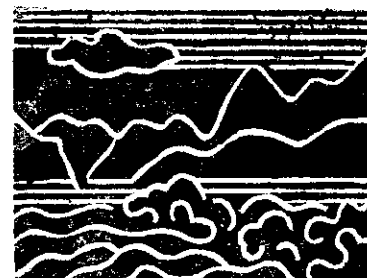


University Courses for Cadres of Lao Cai Province

Lao Cai is a mountain province lying between the Viet Bac and the Tay Bac (2) Autonomous Regions and bordering on China. Its population includes 20 different ethnic groups, the largest being the Meo.

In 1969 and 1971, Lao Cai opened two university courses on agricultural economy and industrial economy and techniques with 86 students consisting of administrative cadres of districts and provinces and cadres from other branches such as industry, agriculture, etc. Each month, students are gathered and given

lessons for five consecutive days, then they receive text-books and return to their offices to resume their work while continuing to study. Every year they have one month to spend in revising lessons and sitting for an examination. Experienced teachers from the Hanoi Agricultural College and the Hanoi Polytechnic are sent to give lectures and help students organize discussions. In the years of fighting against the US air war, the students' offices had to disperse and the communications in these regions were difficult, but the studies and teaching were on without interruption.



Hoa Binh province alone has made geological surveys and found 119 places on its rivers and streams where hydro-electric can be built. It will make use of its 69 existing hydro-electric stations to operate 86 generators with a total capacity of more than 1,200kw; 108 pumping stations to water 4,500 hectares of ricefield; and 79 husking machines with a capacity of 30,000 tons per year.

These small hydro-electric stations have efficiently served the economic and cultural development in the mountain regions.

Hydro-electric Stations

At present, North Viet Nam's mountain regions have 230 small and medium-sized hydro-electric stations some of which were financed by the government and others by the people with government technical assistance.

The 4,000 kw Cam Son hydro-electric station is the biggest in the mountain regions. There are 18

others with a capacity of 100 to 1,000kw in the provinces of Ha Giang, Lao Cai, Cao Bang, Lang Son, Hoa Binh and Thanh Hoa.

Hoa Binh has 69 and Quang Ninh 43 small hydro-electric stations with a capacity of 10 to 50kw. These are the two provinces with the largest number of hydro-electric stations.

1. The Viet Bac Autonomous Region consists of Bac Thai, Tuyen Quang, Lang Son, Cao Bang, Ha Giang provinces with 24 ethnic groups.

2. The Tay Bac (North-West) Autonomous Region consists of Lai Chau, Nghia Lo and Son La provinces.

One Year's Implementation of the Paris Agreement...

(Continued from page 3)

— *Hundreds of thousands of political prisoners are still languishing in the prisons and detention camps of the Saigon Administration:*

The PRG has repeatedly stated its willingness to return to the Saigon Administration all the Vietnamese civilian personnel captured and detained by it.

But Nguyen Van Thieu has bluntly stated: "There are no political prisoners in South Viet Nam. There are only two kinds of prisoners: 21,000 common-law convicts and 5,081 Communist prisoners" (Nguyen Van Thieu's letter to Pope Paul VI dated April 9, 1973). Yet the whole world knows that over 200,000 political prisoners are being kept in the Saigon Administration's prisons and detention camps.

The Saigon Administration has resorted to many perfidious tricks in an attempt to avoid returning the prisoners: sending detainees from one prison to another, dispersing prisoners to various jails, registering political prisoners as "common-law convicts," compelling detainees to sign "release certificates," sending many prisoners to unknown destinations or liquidating them secretly.

Of the 5,081 Vietnamese civilian personnel whom it admits holding in detention, the Saigon Administration has only returned just over 1,500 so far to the Provisional Revolutionary Government.

In the meantime, tens of thousands of persons who desire peace and stand for national reconciliation and concord have been jailed, and the political prisoners are living in unspeakable conditions.

It must be stressed that the police organization and the system of prisons and detention camps in South Viet Nam set up by the Americans are still being financed by the United States.

— *The South Vietnamese people's democratic liberties continue to be trampled underfoot:*

One day after the signing of the Agreement, Nguyen Van Thieu

said that "as for all our affairs, laws, and administration, we'll do exactly as in the past, nothing is changed..." and one day after the signing of the June 13, 1973 Joint Communiqué, the Saigon Administration's spokesman stated: "The Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam reserved the right to maintain restrictions on democratic liberties."

All the PRG proposals towards ensuring the population's full exercise of their democratic liberties have met with the Saigon Administration's refusal.

Scores of new "decrees" have been enacted which put restrictions on democratic liberties in the zone controlled by the Saigon Administration. The "accelerated pacification" and "Phoenix" programmes are carried on with a force of 125,000 policemen. The "crop-protection plan" aims at plundering the rice, even in places recently devastated by typhoons and floods, and effecting an economic blockade of the zone under the control of the PRG.

In less than one year, from January 28 to December 15, 1973, the Saigon Administration has "purged" more than three million people, arrested and tortured over 36,000 persons, plundered hundreds of thousands of tons of rice, tens of thousands of head of cattle and 145 billion South Vietnamese piastres, and herded more than 920,000 people into concentration camps.

— *No progress has been recorded in the settlement of the internal problems of South Viet Nam:*

The Agreement clearly stipulates: "Foreign countries shall not impose any political tendency or personality on the South Vietnamese people." (Art. 9C). However, US President R. Nixon has openly declared that he recognizes the Nguyen Van Thieu Administration as the only legal administration in South Viet Nam and in practice, the US Government continues to maintain and

strengthen this administration as an instrument of US neo-colonialism in South Viet Nam.

As for the Saigon Administration, it has never, from the beginning, concealed its opposition to the Paris Agreement, and has evaded the most fundamental and urgent questions whose settlement would have created favourable conditions for solving the internal problems of South Viet Nam. It has turned a deaf ear to the PRG's constructive proposals.

At the same time, it has been using every possible means to sabotage the achievement of national reconciliation and concord. It has repeated the old refrain about the "withdrawal of North Vietnamese troops" a demand already rejected by the Paris Agreement — and has made it a prerequisite for the settlement of the political questions in South Viet Nam. It wants to turn the National Council of the National Reconciliation and Concord into a mere electoral commission in the framework of the so-called "Constitution" of the Thieu regime and to exclude from the Council the third force whose existence it denies.

— *The United States is not willing to put a complete end to its military involvement and interference in the internal affairs of South Viet Nam:*

Before the signing of the Paris Agreement, the United States had already been seeking to undermine it, putting into action the biggest airlift in the history of the Indochina wars and urgently introducing into South Viet Nam hundreds of aircraft, tanks, artillery pieces, and tens of thousands of tons of other armaments and munitions at an average rate of 700 tons a day.

The troops of the United States and of its allies withdrawing from South Viet Nam did not take with them their armaments, munitions and war material. This amounts in fact to illegally introducing hundreds of thousands of tons of armaments and war material into South Viet Nam. The United States also failed to dismantle its military bases in South Viet Nam.

Over the past year, the United States has many times illegally brought armaments, munitions, aircraft, tanks, and artillery

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pieces into South Viet Nam. It has left behind tens of thousands of military personnel disguised as civilians, and keeps secretly bringing thousands more into South Viet Nam. There are now more than 24,000 US military personnel disguised as civilians in South Viet Nam. For the direction and management of this system of "advisers," former US military organizations have been disguised as "civilian" agencies: DAO, SAAFO, USAID, four "consulates-general" and many other provincial "consulates" established after the signing of the Paris Agreement.

US military aid to the Saigon Administration after the signing of the Paris Agreement is even bigger than in the war years. In the fiscal year 1973-1974, US aid to South East Asia stands at 4,069 billion dollars (as against 2,735 billion for fiscal years 1971-1973) of which more than 3 billion are for the "use, maintenance and purchase of arms" in South Viet Nam.

With regard to the DRVN, the United States deliberately delayed the removal of mines in an attempt to prolong in practice the blockade of the territorial waters of the DRVN. It is continuing its encroachments on the sovereignty, territory and security of the DRVN, especially by sending its aircraft on 39 occasions (up to December 15, 1973) to violate DRVN airspace for espionage activities.

With its so-called "strategy of deterrence," the United States is maintaining big air and naval forces in Thailand and South-East Asia, in an attempt to intimidate the Vietnamese and other peoples of Indochina.

— *The United States has delayed the carrying out of its obligations with regard to the healing of the wounds of war in the DRVN:*

After many months of discussions, interrupted for weeks by the United States, the DRVN-US Joint Economic Commission has reached an agreement on the amount of credits and their use for a five-year plan, and an agreement for the first year of the US contribution to healing the wounds of war and to post-war reconstruction in the DRVN. However, the United States has posed political conditions for the signing of a document on the agreed points.

— *Regarding Cambodia and Laos:*

In Cambodia, the United States and the Saigon Administration continued their military involvement: attacks by US aircraft up to August 15, 1973, with 240,000 tons of bombs; introduction of a large number of US advisers and military personnel to take in hand the command of the Lon Nol puppet troops, introduction of big quantities of war material after August 15, 1973, dispatch of mercenaries of Khmer origin from South Viet Nam; and grant of an additional military aid of 200 million dollars for the fiscal year 1973-1974... Thailand has always been used as an American air base, a training-base and a logistic base for operations against Cambodia.

In Laos, the United States had to accept the signing of the Vientiane Agreement by the Lao parties but it sought by every means to delay the signing of the Protocol to the Agreement and went so far as to engineer the

military coup of August 20, 1973. It continues regular reconnaissance flights over Laos and the regular air supply of arms and munitions to the Vientiane army and the Vang Pao Special Forces. 20 Thai battalions financed by the United States are still present on Lao soil.

Important US military and economic aid to Laos has been maintained at a high level—over 350 million dollars a year. Since the conclusion of the Vientiane Agreement, the Vientiane army, with the support of the United States and Thailand, has launched over 200 land-grabbing operations against the areas under the control of the Lao patriotic forces.

— *Slanders and threats, familiar tricks of the American imperialists:*

The United States and the Saigon Administration have levelled against the DRVN and the PRG slanderous charges of "violations" of the Agreement: "infiltration of men and arms from North into South Viet Nam," "construction by the North of 12 airfields in South Viet Nam," "preparations for a major offensive by the North against the South,"... in order to make people believe that "both sides have committed violations."

In the meantime, the United States has uttered insolent threats against the Vietnamese people. Key personalities in the Nixon Administration have referred to the possibility of "a new intervention in Indochina" by the US Air Force. On November 30, 1973, US Secretary of Defense J. Schlesinger bluntly stated: "President Nixon has the right to order a resumption of the bombing in Indochina."

PART THREE: THE URGENT QUESTIONS OF THE MOMENT TO BE SETTLED WITH A VIEW TO ENSURING A STABLE AND LASTING PEACE IN VIET NAM

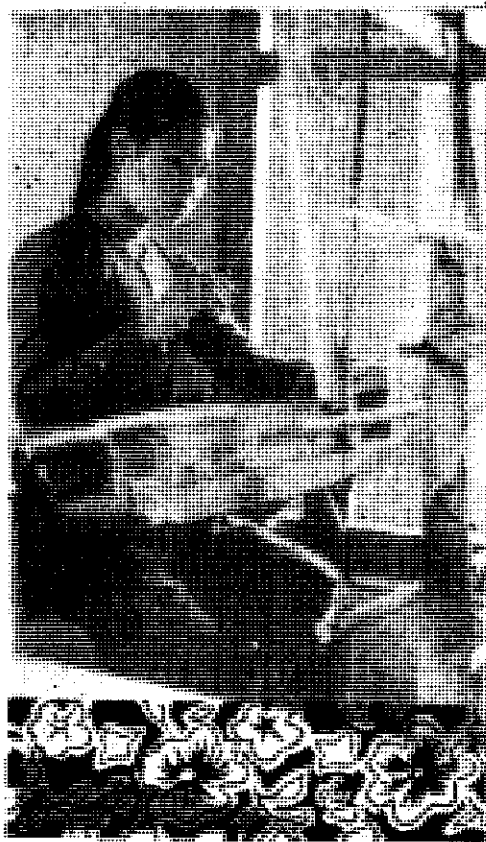
The main and immediate cause of the present situation in South Viet Nam is the refusal of the United States to put a complete end to its military involvement and intervention in the internal affairs of South Viet Nam. Nobody could pretend for a moment that "the United States has

ended its military involvement" and "the present conflict in South Viet Nam is merely a civil war," as is being claimed by key personalities in the US ruling circles.

In order to maintain a stable and lasting peace in Viet Nam,

the urgent question now is that the United States and the Saigon Administration must strictly respect and scrupulously implement the Paris Agreement on Viet Nam, the Act of the International Conference on Viet Nam and the June 13, 1973 Joint Communiqué.

OURIER



With the **Buoi** Weavers

flirts of the capital and other cities. Other villages have tried to rival it, but failed; the women prefer Buoi. The village boys used to tease Hanoi girls:

Ohé!

*Handsome girl with the emerald
sash!*

*Come to Buoi, the Village of
Grape-fruits,*

*At every side are lush green rice-
fields*

*The West Lake's water is fresh
and limpid*

*Day and night our looms are
singing...*

In his well-known poem on the West Lake, Nguyen Huy Luong evoked this sight:

*Weeping willows on the edge of
the lake are caressed by the wind*

*Like orioles teasing each other,
shuttles sing without resting.*

This was at the end of the 18th century when, under the Tay Son, the country knew a short revival.

"Buoi satin was well known for its beauty," said Mr Khoat, the oldest man in the village. "In former days customers used to fight over it, but we weavers were far from having a decent life. We had to do all the operations ourselves — winding, spinning, weaving — and we worked very

slowly. To sell our goods we were at the mercy of the traders. Our work was artistic but we got starvation wages. With the coming of the colonialists, it was still worse, as we could not stand up to the competition from French textiles. It was hard to make both ends meet. The 1945 famine carried off nearly half our population."

The war gave the finishing blow: to defend Hanoi against guerilla activities, the French constructed a "no man's land" around the city and Buoi was burnt down. The singing of the looms was silenced for good.



A big ox-cart loaded with bundles of yarn was in front of us. Walking behind the lumbering oxen on the paved village road, we had ample time to ponder over the fate of hand-loom weavers with the coming of modern machines: in the early 19th century, the proletarians of Manchester

THE tram-car runs along the West Lake through an old street lined with low houses, and stops at its terminus. We are in a suburb of Hanoi; and after walking a few hundred metres, we find ourselves in a village in the open country with quiet ponds in which graceful areca trees are reflected, hedges of bamboo or holly, shady gardens with longanes, jack fruits and carambola trees growing close to one another. The wide alleys paved with brick show that the village is quite wealthy. Through the trees, you can see the West Lake shining in the sun, or guess its presence. And right from the first moment you hear the regular clickclack of the shuttles; it follows you everywhere and gives you the feeling of being among humming beehives: these are the looms of Buoi (1) the "Village of Grape-fruits."

Is there a Vietnamese girl who has not heard of the satin of Buoi? Pure silk, light and airy with reflected brilliance, it has been worn for centuries by all the

Lyons, Lille, who worked 14 hours a day, ended by angrily braking their machines; in the colonies, the weavers were reduced to begging because of the competition by European goods. In Viet Nam after the liberation of the North in 1954, we modernized the Nam Dinh Textile Mill, and built the March 8 Textile Mill, what has become of these tens of thousands of rural weavers?

"Some families set up their looms again in 1954," Khoat told us. "But there was no more silk and we shifted to cotton weaving and made towels. Mrs Cuc is here and will tell you more about what has been happening over these last few years."

Mrs Cuc, a slender woman of about forty, is vice-president of the Buoi weavers' co-operative; she accompanied us all through our visit to the 106 looms set up, some in an old pagoda, others in a new workshop covered with red tiles. All the looms are powered by electricity, but coming near you see that all the parts are made of bamboo and wood, only the nuts and screws and bicycle chains used to adjust various parts are of steel. We are, indeed, at the stage of semi-mechanization--and that cart, moving on car-tyre wheels and ball-bearings, isn't it too a specimen of semi-mechanization?

"In the beginning each family worked at home with a hand-loom. The yarn was supplied by the State; and as we were skilful weavers, we got orders for high-quality export goods, for instance towels. We did not bother ourselves about raw materials, or sales, and so we had security. But the hand-loom method was too old-fashioned, working by hand in our time does not give enough to keep our families. Collecting goods was a drudgery--always going from house to house. That was the situation from 1958 to 1960. We had to find another formula. New techniques require a radical change of organizational forms. Co-operation was a pressing need."

Old Khoat who had kept silent up to then sprang up: "It was us, the old folk, who were vanguard in this and not the youth," he said. "We know what the past was like. Buoi satin was beautiful, but not the weaver's life. To have machines, the only way for us is to come together. The State gave us financial aid to begin with and helped us find raw materials and outlets for our goods. It was we, old people, who persuaded the die-hard to join our



co-operative. I tell you, it was not easy to uproot the old habits, accustomed as we were to work alone, at any time we liked, without having to give account to anybody, except of course to the trader who bled us white."

Thanh Cong co-operative, which started business in 1960, now has 300 members, three-quarters of them women, and runs eleven workshops occupying an area of 2,000 square metres. Each weaver turns out five times more now than with a hand-loom, and earns from 58 to 100 dong per month, that is as much as a worker in a State enterprise. This does not include the profit derived from the family's garden which gives vegetables and poultry thus ensuring living conditions better than those of a worker in an urban centre. In one workshop, the female workers are learning a new trade, that of weaving beautiful woollen carpets much valued for export purposes.

"Where did you learn to manage an enterprise of such a size?" I asked Mrs Cuc.

"I was elected to the management board together with some other comrades," she said. "We were nearly at the same level of education. When I left the 4th form I just knew the four mathematical operations. Book-keeping, schedules, norms were all mixed up in my head. The State services helped us disentangle things little by little. And above all, we won the confidence of our people. They wanted at any cost to improve living conditions; socialism, which formerly seemed a far-fetched thing, a day-dream, was at hand; or rather, we could build it with our own efforts. We sat down to discuss things together and find appropriate solutions; what we could not find out we could ask from the specialist services."

"Do you have great difficulties in your work as three-quarters of your personnel are women?"

"With women, it is at the same time more difficult and easier. At the outset anything that was new frightened them: they had a traditional inferiority complex; they thought that women were unable to operate such a new enterprise and they did not have confidence in their fellow-women who were appointed to leading posts. On the other hand, when women have been convinced, they are more zealous than men; elected to responsible posts, they are more thrifty of the co-operative's fund. Some men are inclined to avail themselves of any occasion to organize festivities. Besides, only women can run such an enterprise as ours which gathers nearly 300 female workers, for it is not only a question of production. Come and see!"

Mrs Cuc took us to the nursery and infant class of the co-operative. Four nurses attend to the babies while a mistress teaches the forty children of the infant class. At the infirmary, a nurse and a woman assistant-physician give care to the co-op members and their families.



"Do you enjoy the same social advantages as workers and functionaries of State enterprises?"

"Each woman worker is entitled to six days of fully-paid leave per year, instead of ten days as in State enterprises; she receives her pay also on festive days. In case of childbirth she enjoys a two-month's maternity leave. She receives a monthly allowance from the third child onward. At sixty, she receives a retirement pension."

"The past is left far behind," old Khoat remarks. "Paid leave, allowance, medical care, maternity leave, all that was unknown to me in my youth!"

"Besides, our management board does not only see to material advantage. The co-operative is for us a large family. Our great concern is to raise the cultural level of women. In our co-operative most of the young girls have finished the 7th form. Evening classes for secondary education are organized for 73 girls and women who have finished primary education. We have a sports team and an artistic group. From time to time our young workers are taught music by artistes coming from the city."

How will the co-operative operate in ten or fifteen years to come? Orders for up-to-date

machines have been placed, but how to install them in this rural framework? What is the optimum size needed for co-operative of this kind — optimum not only for production, but also for the living conditions of the workers and their families? Will Buoi village be turned into an urban centre with all the complications this entails, or will it keep its rustic aspect with gardens and ponds between two workshops? And this family-like atmosphere? When Mrs Cuc hears all these questions she only smiles.

PHUONG ANH

(1) Grape-fruit

BOOK NOTES

Bước đầu tìm hiểu các dân tộc thiểu số ở Việt Nam (*Glimpses of Ethnic Groups of Viet Nam*) by La Van Co, *Social Sciences Publishing House, Hanoi*, 1973, 13x18.8cm, 216 pages.

The book deals with the history, literature, revolutionary tradition and achievements of Viet Nam's minority nationalities over the past 40 years.

It has 21 illustrations and maps showing the areas inhabited by the nationalities grouped according to their dialects.

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Thơ ca Cách mạng 1925-45 (*Revolutionary Poetry 1925-45*), edited by the Literature Institute, *Social Sciences Publishing House, Hanoi*, 1973, 13x18.8cm, 488 pages.

Poems composed since the period preceding the founding of the Indochinese Communist Party up to the August Revolution (1925-45) and collected by the Literature Institute. Some were sent to the Institute by veteran revolutionaries, others have been collected by the Institute from their authors, or retold from those who had participated in the revolutionary movement.

A 60-page comment on the artistic and ideological value of these poems is also included.

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Đoi thoại mới (*A New Conversation*) by Che Lan Vien, *Literature Publishing House, Hanoi*, 1973, 12x19cm, 172 pages.

The 68 poems in this collection by Che Lan Vien, a well-known Vietnamese poet, were composed from 1967 to 1973 during the resistance against US aggression, for national salvation.

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Hồng Gấm. Tuổi hai mươi (*Hong Gam. The Age of Twenty*) by Luu Trong Lu, *Literature Publishing House, Hanoi*, 1973, 13x18.8cm, 130 pages.

Two plays in verse by a well-known Vietnamese poet.

Hong Gam (3 acts, 7 scenes) praises the South Vietnamese heroine Nguyen Thi Hong Gam who sacrificed her life in the fight for the defence of her country.

The Age of Twenty (2 scenes), about a North Vietnamese family in the movement to join the army and fight against US aggression.



CHRONOLOGY

(Continued from page 32)

27. At the Joint Commission for Implementation of the Agreements, Soth Phetrasi, representative of the Lao Patriotic Forces, denounced the encirclement of units of the patriotic armed forces in Vientiane by rightist forces.

28. Exchange of notes between the PRG and the Chinese Government on the exemption from entry and exit visas for citizens of both sides who want to visit the People's Republic of China and South Viet Nam.

— A new cabinet was set up in Phnom Penh with Long Boret as "Prime Minister."

31. New violation of the DRVN air space by US reconnaissance planes.

— President Ton Duc Thang signed a decree awarding the title of hero to 62 units and 35 individuals.

JANUARY 1974

1. President Ton Duc Thang's New Year message: The Vietnamese people will carry on the struggle for consolidating peace, speeding socialist construction in the North, achieving independence and democracy in the South and advancing toward national reunification.

2. In Can Tho, Nguyen Van Thieu declared that there would be neither peace nor general elections, that the South Vietnamese bipartite talks could be cancelled and that the war had been resumed. However, he admitted that the situation was deteriorating for him.

4. At Tan Son Nhat, the military delegations of the two South Vietnamese parties agreed on the principle of returning the remaining number of captured and detained military and civilian personnel mentioned in the plan reached in July 1973.

— At La Cell Saint Cloud, the PRG delegate to the bipartite talks insisted on three urgent measures concerning: 1. An effective cease-fire; 2. The resumption of the return of detained personnel; 3. The people's exercise of democratic liberties.

6. New devaluation of the Saigon piastre — the 11th since the beginning of 1973. The new rate was 560 piastres to a dollar.

— President Ton Duc Thang sent a message of greetings to Prince Souphanouvong on the

occasion of the 18th anniversary of the foundation of the Lao Patriotic Front.

7. J. Schlesinger, US Secretary of Defence, declared that in case of a "general attack" in South Viet Nam, Nixon might ask for Congress authorization to use US tactical aircraft.

8. A Pentagon spokesman announced that the United States would replace F-5A aircraft of the Saigon army with the more modern F-5Es. This would be a flagrant violation of Article 7, Chapter II, of the Paris Agreement.

9. Thieu made a new declaration, threatening to use force and asking the US not to reduce its aid to Saigon.

— In Thailand, 5,000 students in Bangkok demonstrated and demanded expulsion of CIA agents.

10. The Saigon paper *Dai Dan Toc* revealed that Thieu was preparing an amendment to the Saigon Constitution which would allow him to remain in power for another five-year term.

11. At Tan Son Nhat, General Hoang Anh Tuan, head of the PRG military delegation, condemned the Saigon administration for going back on its word and eluding the question of returning captured and detained personnel which had been agreed upon on January 4.

— During several consecutive days, Saigon aircraft, in hundreds of sorties, bombed and shelled positions of the PRG in the province of Chuong Thien, Gia Lai... including the ICCS quarters in Duc Co and the locality of Duc Nghiep which had been chosen for the return of captured and detained personnel.

12. The Command of the Saigon army admitted that two of its aircraft had been brought down in Tay Ninh and An Xuyen.

14. Establishment of diplomatic relations at ambassadorial level between the DRVN and Malta.

15. Continuous shelling of Phnom Penh by the Cambodian liberation artillery since December 23. The HQ, the Pochentong airfield, the residence of Lon Nol, Long Boret, Sosthene Fernandez, the US military attaché... were hit. Hundreds of Americans and puppets were killed. *AFP* commented that it was the fiercest artillery pounding ever against Phnom Penh.

— Thai Prime Minister Sanya Thammasak, yielding to the people's pressure, ordered that an investigation on CIA activities in Thailand be carried out.

CHRONOLOGY

(December 16, 1973 — January 15, 1974)

DECEMBER 1973

17. Arriving in Paris, Special Adviser Le Duc Tho said that his meeting with Kissinger had been proposed by the US side and not the Vietnamese side as claimed by US and Saigon sources.

— Flight over DRVN territory by US reconnaissance planes.

— Signing in Ulan Bator of an agreement on non-repayable aid for 1974 from the Mongolian People's Republic to the PRG of South Viet Nam.

18. A spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the RSVN denounced US allegations according to which a Four-Party JMC plane had been attacked by the PLAF on December 13. The US-Saigon side on its own authority had sent a plane to the territory controlled by the PRG without the Four-Party Commission's agreement, supposedly to look for the graves of those who had disappeared during wartime.

— The Patriotic Forces' last contingent of personnel and material was flown to Vientiane and Luang Prabang.

20. Thirteenth anniversary of the founding of the National Front for Liberation of South Viet Nam. An important speech was delivered by PRG President Huynh Tan Phat stressing the South Vietnamese people's determination to defend the Paris Agreement and peace. The PRG Council conferred the title of hero on 56 individuals and 33 units of the PLAF.

— Le Duc Tho and Kissinger met in Paris on problems of common interest. The two parties will remain in contact to resume conversations if necessary.

— New crime committed by Saigon troops in Pho Phong village, Quang Ngai district. Children were buried alive, women raped and old men ill-treated.

— Lon Nol admitted that a US F-4H plane bombed a position of the Cambodian Liberation Armed Forces 70 miles Southwest of Phnom

Penh. AFP reported that 20 Chiang Kai-shek pilots were serving in Lon Nol's air force.

— Secret meeting of extreme rightist generals in the suburbs of Vientiane for an eventual coup d'état in Laos.

21. In a message sent to Prince Souvanna Phouma, Prince Souphanouvong stated that the neutralization of Vientiane and Luang Prabang was a basic requirement for the formation of the Provisional National Union Government and the National Coalition Political Council.

22. The High Command of the Lon Nol Army admitted that dozens of officers of this army had been involved in a theft of brass shells.

— *L'Humanité* published a "secret document" of the Pentagon dated June 21, 1973 relating to the American attempt to revise a number of clauses of the Vientiane Agreement. The document admitted that the CIA was continuing to maintain the Vang Pao Special Forces and that 27 Thai infantry battalions and 3 artillery battalions financed by the USA had remained in Laos.

24. Ending of the visit to the Soviet Union of the PRG delegation led by President Nguyen Huu Tho (January 18 to 24). An agreement on non-repayable economic aid from the USSR to the RSVN was signed.

— According to a Harris Institute opinion poll 73% of those questioned thought that Nixon had lost the confidence of the public.

25. Christmas in Saigon: the duller for 20 years (commented the Saigon paper *Tin Sang*), and in Washington: women clinging to the enclosure of the White House shouted slogans against the continuation of the US war policy in Viet Nam.

26. Ending of the visit to the DRVN of a delegation of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR.

(Continued on page 31)